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ASHLAND THEOLOGICAL BULLETIN

Ashland Theological Seminary

Ashland, Ohio

Spring 1968

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Introduction to a Theological Bulletin

THE PUBLICATION of the *Ashland Theological Bulletin* marks a new step for Ashland Theological Seminary. It seems appropriate to indicate some of the plans and purposes of this venture with the presentation of the first issue.

The *Bulletin* is designed to be the voice of Ashland Theological Seminary. As such it will seek to reflect the concerns and emphases of the Seminary. Further, the *Bulletin* is presented as an instrument for dialogue between the Seminary and its institutional peers, and, as well, between the Seminary and pastors, students, and interested laymen within the Ashland constituency. An additional concern is the promotion of Biblical and theological learning within the broader Seminary community.

The *Ashland Theological Bulletin* will be published yearly in the beginning. There is the possibility of increasing the frequency of publication in the future. Much of the material for the *Bulletin* will come from faculty members of the Seminary; however, articles from students, alumni, and friends of the Seminary will occasionally appear in the publication.

Comments and criticisms from friends of the Seminary are invited. These should be addressed to the editor at the Seminary.

Owen H. Alderfer, editor

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A Philosophy of Brethren Church History

ALBERT T. RONK

FRIENDS of the writer who were interested in his recent studies in Brethren Church history asked if the research had led to any definite conclusions about this people and movement. An historian gathers data for a factual treatise of his subject, but he cannot avoid conclusions if his work is thorough and honest. This experience of concentrating on the faith of his fathers has more deeply rooted his Brethren devotion, and confirmed it in a strong philosophical conviction.

Our thought on Brethren history, as a part of general church history, is somewhat analogous to the complex of rills and rivers that carry the waters of the earth to its seas. It is obvious that each branch gathers to its embrace the character of its environmental source and flow. Tributarial detritus, solution and solid, mingles with the flux of the mainstream where all united rushes to join the ocean depths.

Human history is a mighty moving stream. It flows in the channel of space-time continuum toward the majestic sea of eternity. Every person born of woman; every incident, movement and crisis; every superstition, tradition and philosophy; every faith and religion — all move with the stream, and each contributes to the growing mass.

History is not a chain of unrelated incidents. Each unit is deeply rooted in the common setting. It is swayed by its supporting past, molded by its environmental present, and, in turn, contributes to the future then aborning.

Brethren Church history was the product of a past of compelling posture in religious circles without which it would have never come to birth. It grew out of what it considered forbidding situations into a struggling future of faith lasting

more than two hundred and sixty years. The fact that it has survived for almost three centuries gives strong evidence that it has enjoyed some measure of heaven's blessing.

We are convinced that the founders of the Brethren movement in Germany, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, were born and nurtured for action in the unfinished work of reformation. Our consideration of parenthood cannot leave God out of the equation. We believe that every person born into this world is here for a definite purpose — that there is divine intervention in spermic and ovic selection, and in genic recession and dominancy. Was not some such truth veiled in Mordecai's word to Queen Esther that she had "come to the Kingdom for such a time . . . ?"

The small group that founded the Brethren cause were earnestly seeking for a field of service and fruitful witness. They believed that the conditions in the State Churches called for reform and prayed that they might be deemed worthy to help bring it about. The extent to which they were usable to the purpose is another matter. Progress is often stalemated by human limitations or perversities. Through the history of divine-human relations even specifically chosen leaders have fallen far short of God's holy desire. Abraham and Sarah outran His plan in the birth of Ishmael; Moses presumptuously smote the rock; David's hands were too bloody to build the Temple; and Peter denied his Lord at the trial. Wherever the Brethren have failed in their commitment or calling, the Brethren have been at fault and not their mission. By the same token, every group achievement and personal triumph in life and deed, must be attributed to the guiding hand of Deity.

The Brethren movement was born out of a mystic cloud that hovered over the ravaged and restless Palatinate of western Germany in the half-century following the Thirty Years' War. The State Churches had settled down to a cold dogmatic formalism. They revelled in the tax-supported status and legal limitation of their number. Moral and spiritual life became decadent, a state abhorrent to many of their communicants. From that type of church life many withdrew to independency and depth of heart-searching. They became known by names that somewhat identified their salient characteristics. Among them were Spiritists, Inspirationists, Anabaptists, Mennonites, Pietists, etc. There was a strong element of mysticism in all

of the groups gathered from the influence of Boehme, Tauler, Arndt, and others.

The civil and religious climate in Germany at the time contributed to the cause for the dissidents to search the records for historical facts about the ancient Church. That which they found historically agreed with the ideas born from their experiences. They held that piety must supersede prevailing profligacy in morals; that church and state must be separate; that primitive rites were required in celebration of the sacraments; that coercion in religious practice gave way to freedom of choice; that the measure of a believer's life must be piety and Christ-likeness, and not adherence to a creed or denominational order.

The group that covenanted together to seek out the doctrine and practices of the Apostolic Church and finally effected the organization in 1708 were moved by a mystic sense and testified to "that inward voice,"¹ and, "that a man feels inwardly and powerfully assured by the Spirit of God."² They were so confident in their *mission* that they finalized their trust with "our good God who is love purely and impartially, can and will add by degrees what may be wanting in this or that knowledge."³ The *sine qua non* of Brethren mission, then, is the deep conviction that the group must bear witness to the truth by both precept and example. An instance in point is the reply of a colonial church father to Benjamin Franklin that the Brethren write no creed because they fear they will feel "bound and confined to it, and perhaps be unwilling to receive further improvement."⁴ They found assurance for their position in the promise of Jesus that the Holy Spirit "shall guide you into all the truth," and, "He shall teach you all things." (John 14:26; 16:13.) Developing Brethren history has repeatedly confirmed to changing generations that methods of implementing their mission must meet the prevailing conditions but that truth is unchanging and eternal.

The experiences of division and separation in the Brethren historical stream have largely been due to disagreements over the changing world scene and points of denominational emphasis. When disagreements failed to be considered amicably by the leaders but grew from different viewpoints to arguments, from arguments to disputes, from disputes to controversy, and in controversy the clash of personalities, not being agreed dif-

ferent parties would not walk together. Political, economic, social and theological climates are bound to change, calling for reevaluation of the Church's image and posture in the world, but controversy over points of departure never settle the issues in dispute.

The burden of the seeking free-spirits in the German center of Schwarzenau was knowledge of the truth — even among many who rejected participation in the organizational venture. Those who were moved with strong philosophic motivation and were assured within that they had discovered historical truth became so grounded in the faith and practice that they passed them on to posterity with a conviction that two and one half centuries could not dislodge. The vicissitudes of being transplanted into a new world, of ridicule and persecution, of controversy and division, and of changing philosophies of turbulent times have not moved the Brethren from their basic principles, precepts, and tenets.

The scope of Brethren mission embraces both the material and the spiritual realms. The two elements may become discordant, but true to the genius of creation, not inconsonant. Since spirit must function with the material in the space-time situation, each must be kept in its intentional perspective, and each must serve the other. There must be divinely acceptable balance. The application in Brethren mission is obvious in the literal and detailed observance of all the sacraments. Truth is inherently spiritual but the sacramental symbols of truth are material. The Brethren have always moved on the principle that the best way to teach a lesson is by dramatization — that “one picture is worth a thousand words.” The danger, however, lies in practice: the luster of the truth may become obscured by an overemphasis of the symbol. That it has occurred at times among the Brethren no one would deny. Misconstrual of either truth or symbol in no way annuls them.

Brethren mission further insisted that precept must find expression in action and human relations. Belief in the Lord Jesus as the great physician gave substance to James' instruction to the sick to be “anointed with oil in the name of the Lord” with confession of sin. Anointing the sick became a Brethren doctrine. Acceptance of Jesus' exhortation to “swear not at all” but to communicate with “yea and nay” called for rigid adherence to giving an affirmation rather than an oath. Oppo-

sition to force in a believer's conduct, either in peace or war, gave base for the Brethren tenet of nonresistance and anti-war. Biblical concepts of separatedness required practice as well as principle in nonconformity to the world.

It has been said that the Brethren Church is not a theological Church, which carries the idea that it is not dogmatically theological. That is true. Its organization was based on pietistic practice and not on the cleavages of theological doctrine. That is not to say the Brethren movement has had no theology. Theological discussion has been carried on from platform and press. Even theological controversy at times muddled the waters of the theological stream; but basically, the Brethren expounded their theological philosophy, as is stated once in a declaration of principles, in this manner: "We hold the gospel as our only rule of faith and practice, and that in religion, it should be the final and only standard of appeal."⁶

In seeking a divinely instructed balance between the material and the spiritual, the Brethren have sought to direct and hold each in its proper sphere. They admit to "being in the world," and strive "to be not of the world." Undue emphasis on the spiritual would lead to asceticism and the cloister. Magnifying the obverse side of the religious life, its physical and social aspects, invites the dangers of materialism and religious humanism. Discernment of a propitious balance lies in individual choice. Holiness is a personal goal of sainthood while living among the common things of life. Personal faith captures a salvation that must be lived in an alien world and gives assurance of a salvation to be enlarged in a future consumation.

¹ Alexander Mack, *Rites and Ordinances* (Ashland Ohio: Brethren Publishing Company, 1939), p. 77

² *Ibid.*, p. 80.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 98

⁴ Benjamin Franklin, *Autobiography*.

⁵ H. R. Holsinger and S. H. Bashor, "Declaration of Principles," *Progressive Christian*, Vol. III, No. 37.

Spirit and Church

ARTHUR M. CLIMENHAGA

A WORD CONCERNING THE HOLY SPIRIT

IN HIS parting counsels the Lord Jesus Christ spoke freely of the Holy Spirit. This is significant in that one of the remarkable features of His earlier ministry was His comparative silence concerning the Holy Spirit. Earlier occasions were rare when He mentioned the Spirit and then always in circumstances which made the reference necessary — for example, the word to Nicodemus in John 3:15, again speaking of the power of prayer and giving of the Holy Spirit in Luke 11:13, and warning about the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. But now the shadow of the Cross falls over His path and in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth chapters of John Jesus speaks in the Upper Room. In a few pregnant sentences He gathers up all that can be said of the Spirit's relation to the Church, the World and God. Herein is to be found a summary statement of the doctrine of the Spirit as the Third Person of the Trinity.

Three outstanding truths concerning the Spirit underline these teachings of the Christ:

1. The Spirit comes to take the place of Jesus Christ, to be to the disciples all that Christ had been and more than He would have become had He stayed with them.
2. The Holy Spirit promised to the disciples is the self-same Spirit who dwelt in the Christ and was the explanation of His earthly life and ministry.
3. The Spirit comes to dwell in the disciples as He dwelt in Christ in order that Jesus Christ will be reproduced in the disciple thus making him what Christ would have been had He stayed on the earth and lived where that disciple lives.¹

A WORD CONCERNING THE CHURCH

Someone once spoke of history as biography "writ large." Presumably he meant that to write in detail of a few leaders in any country or group is to write in essence of the history of that particular country or group. This is particularly true of sacred history.

The history of the early church is a composite of sketches in more or less detail of the lives of the early disciples and especially of two outstanding leaders, the Apostles Paul and Peter. These sketches are in the final analysis the recounting of the manifestation and working of the Holy Spirit among men during the several decades following the ascension of our Lord. This working of the Spirit among men redeemed by Jesus Christ and called out from a life of sin to a life of holiness is the recorded history of the formation of the Church. The Church then is the biography of its divinely-raised up, Holy Spirit filled and dominated disciples "writ large."²

However, the Church is more than biography or history alone. It is to be understood only in terms of its genesis as a Christian Church, a body of "called out ones." Historically the Church is linked with that Hebrew form, called in the Authorized Version of Acts 7:38, *the church in the wilderness*. The church of the Old Testament was the first representative of the *ecclesia* — the called out ones. It was indeed a community of the Spirit. Although manifested in natural and social laws, it was nevertheless a supernatural organization. As such it was the first step to the Christian Church in that it cultivated and matured that faith which finally issued in the Kingdom of God. It was the community which gave Christ to the world.

The second step towards the Church was the formation by our Lord of the "little flock." Here we stand midway between the Mosaic economy and Pentecost. This flock was composed of two groups — the disciples clustering around John the Baptist and the group gathering around Jesus Himself. All of these believed that Jesus was the Messiah and formed the group in that informal organization who by their love for the Master and faith in His words were spiritually qualified to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. These then were the true nucleus of the Church.³

Combining these two areas of consideration we come to

A WORD CONCERNING THE CHURCH AND SPIRIT

The day of Pentecost is so closely related to the early history of the Church that we are inclined to speak of it as the birthday of the Church. When we consider that the work of the Holy Spirit necessarily demanded an objective economy this is true. The day of Pentecost represented that new order of spiritual life on earth which, initiated by the advent of Christ, was now preserved by the perpetual indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

The Church is thus the creation of the Holy Spirit. It is a community of believers who owe their spiritual life from the first to last to the Spirit. Apart from the Holy Spirit there can be neither Christian nor church. For this reason we declare that the Christian faith is not institutional but experimental. It is not an ordained class, neither is it merely ordinances and sacraments. It is not a fellowship of common interest in service, virtue, or culture. Membership is by spiritual birth alone with the roll of membership kept in heaven. The door to this Church is Jesus Christ. He knows those that are His and they know Him. The church membership list and the Lamb's Book of Life are not always identical. "No man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit," and confession of the Lordship of Jesus Christ is the primary condition of membership in His Church.

The command to tarry in Jerusalem until the enduement of power from on high proves that the one essential equipment of the Church is the gift of the Holy Spirit. Nothing else will avail for the real work of the Church. In fact, the New Testament ideal of the Church is intensely spiritual. Thus while the Church was instituted by Jesus Christ during His earthly ministry, it was constituted by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. The Church was a Spirit-filled, Spirit-empowered, Spirit-guided, Spirit-used body of Christian believers. It grew as the Holy Spirit was active in His operations upon both individuals and society in that day.

Further, the New Testament doctrine of the Church is centered in its spirituality. The Apostle Paul conceived of the Church as a social organism in which the Holy Spirit prevails.

He writes of the Church as the body of Christ (Romans 12:5; I Corinthians 12:27; Ephesians 1:23; 4:12; Colossians 1:24; 2:19). He also calls the Church the bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:23, 25; II Corinthians 11:2). And then concerning admission into the Church, he declares, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bound or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." (I Corinthians 12:13). In a grand final word the Apostle John reports the risen Lord as saying, "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." (Revelation 22:17).

Again the objective of the Church's activity is spiritual in its emphasis. Of this spiritual objective Paul writes to the Christians in Ephesus and neighboring churches: "There is one body, and one Spirit . . . And he gave some, apostles and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." (Ephesians 4:4, 11-13).⁴

What we are really saying here is that a clear and decisive line can be drawn between what we might call "the church of authority" and the "church of the Spirit." As Dr. Frank Bateman Stanger puts it:

"The church of authority" is adhered to by those who are primarily concerned with a dogmatic expression of Christianity in an institution. "The church of authority" is a visible Church, characterized by stability, continuity, and legality. "The church of authority" proposes the way of conformity as the test of Christian loyalty, and insists upon the acceptance of the Christian religion as a governmental scheme.

* * * *

"The church of the Spirit" has been described as an inflowing, refreshing, penetrating tide. "The church of the Spirit," in subordinating opinions to obedience and dogmatics to loyalty, makes the audacious assertion that often "the church of authority," in its institutional procedure, has been tempted to take the wrong road; making central what was incidental, setting logic before life, speculation before inspiration, the letter before the Spirit."⁵

Thus in our consideration of the Church and the Spirit we declare that for much that is undertaken by the Church the

Holy Spirit is not needed. Religious services and organized institutions do not necessarily constitute a Christian Church and such may flourish without the activity of the Holy Spirit in their midst. Therefore, we are constrained to reverse the order of Church and Spirit and turn to

A WORD CONCERNING SPIRIT AND CHURCH

In the course of this presentation, we should now see where we are moving. First we stated in brief our definition of the Holy Spirit. Then we did the same for the Church. In the wording of the third consideration, we deliberately stated it "Church and Spirit." And just as deliberately now we state it "Spirit and Church." For we have come to the point of asking ourselves what happens in the life of that Church when the Spirit is in it and works in it.

First of all, the Church will be a *Spirit-controlled Church*. The work of the Spirit in the Church is set forth in the promises of Jesus on the threshold of His ascension, demonstrated in the Acts of the Apostles, and amplified in selected sections of the New Testament letters. The Gospels record "All that Jesus began to do and to teach, until the day in which He was received up," and the Acts of the Apostles tell of all that He continued to do and to teach *after* the day in which He was received up. This He did through the Holy Spirit who is the active, administrative Agent of the glorified Son. The Holy Spirit is the Paraclete, the Deputy, the Representative, the Vicar of the Ascended Christ. His mission on which He was sent by the Father and Son is to glorify Christ by perpetuating His character, establishing His Kingdom and accomplishing His redeeming purpose in the world. Since the Church is the Body of Christ, and the Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, He — the Holy Spirit — fills the Body, directs its movements, controls its members, inspires its wisdom, supplies its strength. The Spirit guides it into the truth, sanctifies its agents and empowers, calls, distributes, controls, guides, inspires, strengthens them for witness. Thus the work of the Church is to "minister in the Spirit," to speak His message, and transmit His power.

The Spirit has never abdicated His authority nor will he relegate His power. The church that is man-managed instead of Spirit-governed is doomed to spiritual failure. A ministry

that is theologically trained but not Spirit-filled works no miracles. It is possible to excel in mechanics and fail in dynamic. The root-trouble of the present distress is that the Church has more faith in the world and her own personal efforts than in the power of the Spirit. Things will become no better till we get back to the Spirit's realized presence and power.⁶

In a very practical way, then, this brings us to consideration of a *Spirit-Staffed Church*. Summarizing the teachings of I Corinthians 12 relative to the various offices of the Church, we note that the Lord set in the Church: "First Apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues." (I Cor. 12:28). In this same chapter in verse 11 the Holy Spirit is credited with dispensing gifts severally as He will. The gifts are enumerated as "the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, faith, healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, divers tongues, interpretation of tongues."

Now here are two lists, the one pertaining to offices and the other to the gifts. Even though the lists are separate and distinct there is some evidence of overlapping. And it is evident that while the staffing of the Church is the vital concern of the Trinity, yet the staffing is accomplished through the immediate ministry of the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. Thus the words of the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 4:11 and 12 assume importance: "And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ."

We do not conclude from this that a complete formula for church organization is supplied in the New Testament. The offices mentioned both in the Acts and in the writings of the Apostle Paul appear to have been arranged for as various situations arose demanding administrative solutions. We will not suggest that the Spirit's imprimatur or particular blessing can be found on a congregational or presbyterial or episcopal form of church government. Rather, from the New Testament perspective we can lay down a principle for the guidance of the church at all times: Now as then, whatever the office to be filled, it is the Holy Spirit who is immediately and directly concerned.

Note with interest, therefore, that in the early organization of the Church, when the need arose for the selection of "members of the staff" — not to preach or to conduct what was considered to be the apostolic spiritual ministry — but to provide help for timid foreign windows, seven laymen were chosen to be deacons. One of the three prerequisites for the filling of the office of *deacon* was the statement that those chosen should be "full of the Spirit" (Acts 6:3). This is eloquent testimony to the importance of a Spirit-staffed church.

What is of major import then in the development of contemporary church life? Whatever the administrative policy of the church or whatever the technique employed in the selection of the spiritual leader of the local church, the all-important consideration is that church leaders and pastors should be appointed by the Holy Spirit. Spirit-filled pulpits is a continuing urgent need of the hour. The winning of men and women to Jesus as well as the building up of the body of Christ is dependent on Spirit-filled pulpits. We urge that if there are any other offices belonging to more modern churchly endeavor, even though not specifically mentioned in the New Testament, such offices must come within the category of the Spirit's staffing.

The Holy Spirit is at work, ever and always at work. He is at work more markedly today through people, ordinary and extra-ordinary people. Without the Spirit working through the people of the Church, there is no life.

In elaboration of this Dr. Oswald J. Hoffman in the Reformation Sunday sermon at the Berlin World Congress on Evangelism so appropriately said of the Spirit in the Book of Acts,

In this story Luke tells how the Spirit works by *witness*, reaching out to the people beyond the church through Spirit-filled people in the church. It is not a story about church organization, or about church-state relations, or even about methods of evangelism. It is the story of how people filled with the Holy Spirit used every conceivable method to bring the Gospel to people who did not know the Lord Jesus Christ, that they might believe, be baptized and be saved.

It is a story of proclamation and instruction, of how the Spirit of God uses the people of God to proclaim the Word of God to bring to birth new children of God by the Gospel.³

A WORD CONCERNING THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT

One of the major issues of the hour in the life of the Church is the matter of ecumenics. We are hearing so much these days about the ecumenical movement. It is not all good and it is not all bad. Let us not fool ourselves — everyone of us in some measure or form is interested or involved in some way in an ecumenical spirit. The lowliest independent non-denominational church that wants to support some sort of mission program will have to be incipiently ecumenical about it by supporting some faith or interdenominational mission program.

Some mean by ecumenicalism that we must get every Christian to unite with every other Christian, or every church to unite with every other church in one great organization. Some of us do not share that view. What is profoundly needed, however, is for the Church to have what Paul wrote about to the Ephesian church (Eph. 4): "The unity of the Spirit." Union is one thing; unity another.

We do not plead for carnal divisions that too often may exist among us; yes, among us who name the name of Christ and claim the life of the Spirit. We do not plead for pettiness and bigotry. Rather, we plead for that life of the Spirit where all of us in the Church are ready to go to the cross and die to ourselves — die not only to our fleshly selves, but even to our ecclesiastical selves.

Here it is that the Spirit in the Church will work. The New Testament is replete with case-examples on which we can touch ever so briefly. We note three.⁹

Case number one. In Acts 15:1-35 you have an issue before the Jerusalem Council. At stake was not a question of administrative procedure but rather the essence of the Gospel: Is the Gospel for Gentiles or only for Jews; if for the Gentiles too, must they conform to Jewish rites and customs?

Four significant facts stand out in the solution to this threatened rupture of the Church which reveal the working of the Spirit in keeping the unity of the body.

First, we note that a group representative of the whole church settled the matter. Paul and Barnabas did not start a Pauline church at Antioch on lines of freedom for Gentiles, thus abandoning a Petrine church at Jerusalem to Judaizing

tendencies. Second, all parties recognized the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit. To the question, "In what way is the Holy Spirit actually at work today in the world?" Paul and Barnabas brought in field evidence. Thus it was obvious to the Jerusalem Council that the Holy Spirit was really at work among the Gentiles. They had the same spiritual blessings without the Jewish rites. So in substance the decision was rendered: It is our task to cooperate with the Holy Spirit *where* and *as* He is at work. Third, the Council listened to the Scriptures. The Apostle James in his summation quoted the Scriptures. Thus the Scriptures are our rule of faith in that they reveal the mind of the Spirit. Fourth, as a result of settling the main issue as being determined by the Holy Spirit through His Word and obvious work, everyone was willing to be generous to the feelings and even the prejudices of others in matters less important or secondary. What then do we learn in all this? We learn the graciousness of allowing liberty to others in non-essentials, with the assurance that if the Church cooperates with the Holy Spirit such non-essentials will fall off like so many dead leaves in due course.

Case number two is the clear-cut *personality clash* between Paul and Barnabas in Acts 15:36-41. Here we have a giant character, Paul, capable of tremendous self-discipline. This made him often seem severe in his dealings with others. But there is also something towering and magnificent about him as a result which makes his effect on history one of the greatest, if not the greatest, outside of Jesus Christ. Here we have also Barnabas, a "son of consolation." What loving nuances there are in his character. And the two disagree over a weak, homesick boy, who, despite it all, has great potential. In the final sense probably both were wrong and both were right. The thing that counts is that they both agreed in the Spirit to disagree and to carry on in diverse courses the work of the Spirit.

Case number three. We turn to the rebuke by Paul to Peter as reported in Galatians 2:11-16. Peter had failed to be true to his vision and Paul administered the rebuke. When one remembers Peter's later commendation of Paul's letter one has a feeling that the work of the Spirit in Peter was to be seen.

Let us suppose in any of the above cases that the decisions effected or the course of action taken would have been the op-

posite of the one that pertained. What should Paul and Barnabas have done at Jerusalem? What should Paul have done if Peter would not have listened to him? Should they have gone along with positions which violated their consciences in order to preserve unity, or should they have separated? This is one of the most important questions of the hour.

First, of course, the answer must be Scriptural. An answer must never be born either of expediency or compromise. We must see the Scriptures in their wholeness and interpret them with a sound exegesis. Undoubtedly we will have times when separation is called for and becomes a virtue. Again, there are also times when to suffer through a bad situation is redemptive. This is where we must be shut up to the guidance of the Spirit to make application of a general truth which is held in tension between the two poles of any given particular case.

In conclusion, we summarize by declaring that the resources of the Church are in "the supply of the Spirit." The Holy Spirit is more than a Minister of Consolation. He is in reality the Christ to the Church without the limitations of the flesh and the material world. The Spirit can reveal what Christ could not speak. The Spirit has resources of power greater than those Jesus Christ in His incarnation could use, and thus the Spirit makes possible greater works than Christ's. To the Church He is the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Truth, the Spirit of Witness, the Spirit of Conviction, the Spirit of Power, the Spirit of Holiness, the Spirit of Life, the Spirit of Adoption, the Spirit of Help, the Spirit of Liberty, the Spirit of Wisdom, the Spirit of Revelation, the Spirit of Promise, the Spirit of Love, the Spirit of Meekness, the Spirit of Glory, and the Spirit of Prophecy.¹⁰

The Church is called to explore the resources of the Spirit, for the resources of the world of itself alone are futile. And the resources of the Church — these are inadequate! A man-managed, world-annexing church can never save the world or fulfill the mission of Christ. Let the Church seek the fulness of the Spirit — in the Spirit is abundance of wisdom, resources, and power!

¹ Samuel Chadwick, *Humanity and God* (New York: Revell, n. d.), p. 142 f.

² J. A. Huffman, *The Holy Spirit* (Marion, Indiana: The Standard Press), Chapter X, see p. 195 f.

³ H. Orton Wiley, *Christian Theology* (Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press), Vol. III, pp. 103-111. Also, cf. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 303-307.

⁴ Frank Bateman Stanger, "The Church of the Spirit," in *Further Insights Into Holiness*, Kenneth Geiger, compiler, chapter 13. Note particularly pp. 214-216. Also, cf. H. Orton Wiley and Paul T. Culbertson, *Introduction to Christian Theology* (Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press), chapter XX.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 213 f.

⁶ Samuel Chadwick, *The Way to Pentecost* (Ft. Washington, Pennsylvania: Christian Literature Crusade, 1960), p. 12 f.

⁷ Huffman, *op. cit.* pp. 200-211.

⁸ Oswald J. Hoffman, "The Work of the Holy Spirit in Acts," summarized for *Decision* from mimeographed article as presented to the World Congress on Evangelism, West Berlin, Germany, October 31, 1966.

⁹ Cf. Everett Lewis Cattell, *The Spirit of Holiness* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1963), chapter 6.

¹⁰ Chadwick, *op. cit.*, p. 16 f.

Aspects of Psalm I

BRUCE C. STARK

BECAUSE they reflect the deepest personal experiences of men of all ages, the Psalms are the most widely read and most deeply appreciated of all the Old Testament literature. They possess a peculiar warmth that is not to be found in such generous abundance anywhere else in the canonical Old Testament. There are many ponderous questions in reference to the Psalter which cannot presently be a part of our concern. Theories of the origin and growth of the book are diverse and intricate. Classification schemes are myriad, and none are totally satisfactory.

Psalm I offers an interesting object of study for various reasons, including the fact that it comes first. We shall comment on this shortly. The formal analysis of the Psalm is designated by Briggs as two antithetical strophes of six tetrameter lines each.¹ It should be noted, however, that he considers verse three a gloss and does not integrate it into the formal arrangement noted above. The present writer feels no constraint to follow him here.

There is no designated author and no superscription to assist us in reconstructing the historical situation in which the poem was composed. Little help is found in the text either, since the references are rather general. These facts, however, may assist us in our efforts to interpret the psalm, for the very lack of knowledge of a specific historical milieu may properly encourage us to keep the application of the message broad.

Psalm 1 bears close connection contextually with Psalm 2. Some have felt this so strongly that they are willing to be-

lieve that they are, in fact, one. In pointing out the striking similarities between these two psalms, Hengstenberg is most helpful, and the reader is referred to his discussion for more elaborate treatment.² Briefly, however, we may notice here the facts that Psalm 2 begins with judgment where Psalm 1 ends, and Psalm 1 starts with a benediction parallel to the end of Psalm 2. Also, there is a clear parallel between the expression in Psalm 1:6 “. . . the way of the ungodly shall perish,” and the rebels of Psalm 2:12 who are said to “. . . perish in the way.” We linger only to observe the further point that the “meditated” of Psalm 1:2 is closely analogous to “. . . take counsel together” in Psalm 2:2. Delitzsch warns against over-doing these parallels.³

Many expositors have noted the connection between the two ways of the Savior in Mt. 7:13, 14, and the two ways described here in such vivid contrast. It is not demonstrable that Jesus was thinking about this passage since the same general phenomenon may be widely observed in the Old Testament literature, especially the Psalter and Proverbs; yet it is certain that this is the general backdrop of our Lord's thought. The charge of Joshua (Josh. 1:8) is very closely connected with the wording here, especially as it bears on the relation of the blessed life to meditation in the law of God. The relation of Jer. 17:5-8 to Psalm 1 is a problem, but it is fairly certain that there is a dependence.

Along with many others, Calvin expresses the view that Psalm 1 was placed at the beginning of the Psalter as a preface.⁴ It is not too much to suggest that it was composed specifically for this purpose, although this is far from certain. In its own compressed style, the psalm paints in broad but beautiful strokes, a picture of human life. Such life either honors God and his law, or, by a grim logic of experience, comes to despise him. The theme expressed germinally here is reiterated throughout the book of Psalms and illustrated profusely in historical events elsewhere. The truly blessed life is inextricably connected with honoring God. To really believe this is to give our attention to the cultivation of personal piety. This is what the psalm is about.

We offer below an outline of the content of Psalm 1. It will be seen to have sermonic overtones.

Subject: *Men Of Destiny*

I. *The Man of Blessing* vv. 1-3

A. Negatively Considered

1. The blessed man refuses to listen to the counsel of ungodly men.
2. The blessed man refuses to make common cause with sinners.
3. The blessed man shuns the settled and aggressive despite of scorers.

B. Positively Considered

1. The blessed man finds delight in the law of the Lord.
2. The blessed man, as a habit of life, meditates in this law.
3. The blessed man is like a planted tree in a well-watered garden.
 - a. Fruitful (explicit)
 - b. Stable (implicit)
4. The blessed man is spiritually dynamic in prospering his affairs.

II. *The Man of Cursing* vv. 4-6

- A. The ungodly man is marked by instability like chaff.
- B. The ungodly man comes into the judgment of God.
- C. The judgment of God on the ungodly man involves excommunication from spiritual privileges.

Conclusion: God will prosper the righteous man and destroy the wicked. True piety should therefore be cultivated.

I

No attempt will be made to offer a full exposition of Psalm 1 along the lines we have suggested in the outline. We shall concentrate attention on certain key aspects of the psalm. One question that has received considerable discussion is whether the three verbs in verse one constitute a progression of some kind (climax), or whether they simply view the total compass

of experience. The vast majority of interpreters are convinced that there is an escalation here. The intent is to show the insidiousness of evil. Infection begins gradually, but spreads swiftly. Sin does not stampede us into the bottomless pit of infidelity at once. The stages are fairly easy, and in this fact is implicit warning to those who flirt with evil. It is not necessary to insist that the climax is reflected in all three parts of the parallel clause, (i.e. including words for sinners and describing locale) but it is fairly obvious in the verbs. Even so, there is reflected in *lus* (scorner) a certain extreme situation. It indicates an ultimate in depravity. The word *lus* is commonly found in the book of Proverbs and its usage there makes it clear that great perversity is intended. To mock, deride, and scorn God, his people, and his word, surely represents something very radical.

Looking at the individual segments of the verse, we may observe that to walk “. . . in the counsel of the ungodly,” means to give attentive ear to earth-bound philosophies. It is not necessary to restrict the reference to formal counselling. It may very well refer to the subtle and deceitful character of attitudes unthinkingly appropriated. A great deal of harm comes from being unguarded in the presence of worldly thinking. This is but the beginning of sorrows. Calvin stresses that withdrawal from the society of the ungodly is required for any who wishes to apply his mind to meditation on the Word of God.⁵ It cannot be properly denied that many are naive and simple-minded when it comes to understanding the stratagems of the Enemy. Not all can say with Paul that “. . . we are not ignorant of his (Satan's) devices.” (II Cor. 2:11). Careful attention to the verbal sequence here will make us better informed. The infectious power of sin cannot be ignored or belittled.

The expression “. . . standeth in the way of sinners,” may be thought of as *conscious* adoption of worldly attitudes, and the conforming of the life to the logical tyranny of unabashed secularism. It is no longer a case of occasional and intermittent wicked influence, but joining rank and making common cause with the ungodly. Not an inadvertent inconsistency, but a deliberate and reasoned attitude consciously adopted. The infatuation of sin makes the person a prisoner to his own depraved desires and evil imagination. He soon grows more and more settled in his luxury of self-indulgence.

The last member of the series pictures a man who comes at last to a certain obduracy and obstinacy that encourages the most vile and blasphemous attacks upon God and his people. If we take the Hebrew word as meaning *assembly* rather than *seat*, it carries the implication of deliberate plotting. Such a thought immediately calls up Psalm 2:2 where "... take counsel together" makes such a conception explicit. Alexander summarizes the steps of the climax as: (1) occasional conformity; (2) fixed association; and (3) established residence.⁶

II

The expression "blessed" with which the psalm opens may be treated here as providing an appropriate transition to the positive traits of the godly man discussed below. Scholars have rightly related this to the beatitudes of our Lord in Mt. 5:1 ff. In this connection notice that the translation "happy" is definitely not happy. The loss in such a rendering is incalculable. It is difficult to avoid the comparatively superficial connotation of such an expression. Moreover, it seems fairly clear that even the familiar "Blessed is the man . . ." of the AV does less than justice to the Hebrew expression, which is an exclamation, a ringing cry of triumph. Much to be preferred is "O the blessedness of . . .", or, "O the blessings of . . .", depending on whether one understands the form *'ashere* as a simple numerical plural or a plural of intensity. In either case the stress falls on the unique state of the righteous man. Alexander's "How completely happy . . ." is comparatively vapid.⁷

III

The positive elements of the description of the godly man are presented in the figure of the tree, a way of speaking not unfamiliar to the Old Testament. The palm as a stately and noble tree fits well the symbol of spiritual stature. It is an attractive emblem of spiritual life and productivity. The image of deliberate planting, perhaps in the garden of an estate, is the likely thought. The words *palge mayim* (rivers of water) properly refer here to artificially constructed water channels rather than to natural streams. Concrete spiritual virtues are pictured as fruit, and Jesus applies the same general thought to the vine in Jn. 15:1 ff. Fruit comes as a result of a vital, living relationship, and the point is clear that spirituality in-

volves the presence of Christian character. The idea of stability is not explicit, but may be safely inferred.

IV

The contrast between the godly and the ungodly is brought to sharp focus in verses five and six. The idea that “. . . the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment,” is not meant to deny a resurrection of the wicked dead as some have rather strangely supposed, but rather the inability of the sinner to endure the wrath of God is in view. Expositors disagree much about the judgment here referred to, some seeing it as eschatological, others as present. In either case the wicked man will not endure. His life is disoriented toward God and he is therefore afflicted with pernicious instability, (Isa. 57: 20). The evil man buckles beneath the pressures of life through his inherent weakness, but he is also crushed by the millstone of heavenly justice.

Contrariwise, the righteous not only exult in present blessings, but know their future is bright with the assurances of God. The Lord “knoweth” their way. Much more than mere cognition is in view, for this does not distinguish the righteous above the wicked. Briggs sees in this expression a living, tender and intimate relation.⁸ Though the word in certain contexts may mean “choose,” it probably does not reach that far here. It does, however, stand in natural contrast to the perishing of the wicked. In this manner the blessedness of true piety is accentuated.

FOOTNOTES

¹Charles A. Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms*. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark 1907, Vol. I, p. 3.

²E. W. Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Psalms*, Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1846, Vol. I, pp. 1-6.

³Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, T. and T. Clark, 1876, Vol. I, p. 82.

⁴John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1963 edition, p. 1.

⁵*Ibid*, p. 2.

⁶J. A. Alexander, *The Psalms*, Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1850, Vol. I., p. 2.

⁷*Ibid*.

⁸Briggs, *Op. Cit.* p. 7.

Arminius and Arminianism

OWEN H. ALDERFER

TWO incidents reported by Geoffrey F. Nuttall, London pastor, in *Man's Faith and Freedom* state the case for this article.¹ He reports that an examination required for a higher degree in one of the English universities included, among several alternative questions, the topic, "Since Wesley we are all Arminians." In the other incident Nuttall reported discussing an Arminian symposium in which he was involved with a knowledgeable friend, a man who had authored books on subjects related to Methodism. The friend reported: "Do you know, I never realized that there was anyone called Arminius!"

The incidents say at least two things that bear consideration: First, Arminius and the spirit of Arminianism have had enormous bearing upon Christianity in the English speaking world. Second, this is true of us whether we have ever heard of Arminius or not. And this leads to the concerns of this study: Who was James Arminius and what were some of his central ideas? Beyond this, what is Arminianism and what are its principles and impact?

JAMES ARMINIUS

James Arminius began life in a time of considerable religious significance. When he was born (1560) John Calvin was alive; the Council of Trent was in session; Queen Elizabeth I was bringing about the Anglican Settlement; Menno Simons was leading the Anabaptists; Arminius' native Holland was bleeding in religious war.

By the time Arminius came into his own his homeland had largely espoused Calvinism. After study at the new Dutch University of Leyden, Arminius studied abroad in Basle and

Geneva where he became thoroughly oriented in Calvinistic thinking. Returning home he became popular as a preacher in Amsterdam. When he was called upon to answer attacks upon supralapsarian views of election Arminius questioned the very views he was to defend. Called to a chair of divinity at Leyden he aired views which favored human freedom and questioned the current positions on divine decrees.

From 1603 until his death in 1609 Arminius was engaged in controversy with Calvinistic leaders of the Reformed Church. Feeling that his contemporaries in the ministry and the theological chairs of the universities distorted the Scriptures and the Fathers Arminius sought to present what he thought was the Biblical view of the nature of God, the nature of man, and the way of salvation.

The nature of God. Arminius judged that current views which saw God as decreeing the Fall and the damnation of some men from all eternity made God the author of sin. Irenic in a time when peace-loving attitudes were uncommon, Arminius framed his thought in Calvinistic patterns and differed with his opponents only at points where he felt he must. He held that God ordained to save and damn certain particular persons; however, "The decree has its foundation in the foreknowledge of God, by which he knew from all eternity those individuals who would through his preventing grace, *believe*, and through his subsequent grace would persevere, . . ."² There are absolute decrees, but these are three and evangelical; *viz.*, (1) " . . . to appoint his Son . . . for a Mediator, Redeemer, Savior, Priest, and King who might destroy sin by his own death, . . . by his obedience . . . obtain salvation . . . "; (2) " . . . to receive into favor *those who repent and believe* . . . ; but to leave in sin, and under wrath, *all impenitent persons* . . . "; (3) " . . . to administer in a *sufficient and efficacious manner the means* which were necessary for repentance and faith; . . ."³ He asserted, " . . . As believers alone are saved, so only believers are predestinated to salvation. But the Scriptures know no Election, by which God precisely and absolutely has determined to save any one without having first considered him as a believer."⁴ It must be allowed that the sovereign God permits evil. Indeed, Arminius asserted, " . . . Even all actions whatever, concerning evil that can possibly be devised or invented, may be attributed to Divine Providence — employing

solely one caution, 'not to conclude from the concession that God is the cause of sin.'"⁵

The nature of man. In dealing with the question of human nature Arminius' concern was for free will. He insisted upon the Absolute in but one quarter: "I am desirous, that we should . . . contend FOR THE NECESSITY OF GOD ALONE, . . . and that we should contend for the CONTINGENCY OF ALL OTHER THINGS AND EFFECTS."⁶ God is absolute and necessary; He has decreed and provided salvation — but conditionally. When He employs his creatures in the administration of his Providence He ". . . conducts all things in such a manner that . . . he does not take away from them their nature, natural properties or the use of them, but allows them to perform and complete their own proper motions."⁷ God's creatures, including man, are free to be themselves. No less than Calvin, Arminius held that original sin offended God and resulted in punishment. This sin is not peculiar to first man, however; it is common to the entire race so that all are under wrath thereby.⁸ The powers of free will ". . . are not only debilitated and useless unless they be assisted by grace, but [they have] no powers whatever except such as are excited by Divine grace."⁹ "Preventing grace" comes to the rescue so that man is capable of responding to the call of God as he will.¹⁰ Human freedom is hereby genuine. "All unregenerate persons have freedom of will, and a capability of resisting the Holy Spirit, of rejecting the proffered grace of God, . . . these things they can actually do, without any difference of *the elect* and of *the reprobate*."¹¹

Arminius was careful to point out that he was not Pelagian in his views, an error with which he had been charged. He declared that in his own abilities man is helpless; sufficiency of grace must be ascribed to him by the Holy Spirit, ". . . and such *sufficiency* may be ascribed . . . , as to keep at the greatest possible distance from Pelagianism."¹² Man is fallen, the victim of original sin, but through prevenient grace, even in his state of guilt, he has genuine freedom and the power to resist grace and choose for against God.

Soteriology. Having broken from the logic-tight system of Calvinism at the point of predestination, Arminius likewise rejected a limited atonement. Interestingly, he turned to antiquity, quoting Prosper of Aquitain to indicate and support his view: "'With respect both to the magnitude and potency of the

price, and with respect to the one general cause of mankind, the blood of Christ is the redemption of the whole world.'"¹³ Though the atonement is universal in its provisions, not all will share in it. He wrote, "The accidental result of vocation, and that which is not of itself intended by God, is the rejection of the word of grace, . . . the resistance offered to the Holy Spirit." The end of this is the judgment of God.¹⁴

In the soteriological process justification and regeneration are logically and temporally related for Arminius. Sinners are justified — accounted righteous solely by the obedience of Christ, he held, and wrote, "But since God imputes the righteousness of Christ to none except believers, I conclude that . . . it may be well and properly said, To a man who believes, Faith is imputed for righteousness through grace, . . ."¹⁵ Regeneration is closely associated with justification. Arminius declared: ". . . For Christ becomes ours by faith, and we are ingrafted into Christ, . . . that we may draw from him the vivifying power of the Holy Spirit, . . ." Justification expresses in a regenerate life in which " . . . a man . . . has a mind freed from the darkness and vanity of the world, and illuminated with the true and saving knowledge of Christ, . . ."¹⁶ Such experience in the life of the believer leads to a clear assurance of salvation, for, "Since God promises eternal life to all who believe in Christ, it is impossible for him who believes, and who knows that he believes, to doubt of his own salvation, . . ."¹⁷

Sanctification is the desired end in the living of the Christian life. By grace God purifies man who is a sinner, and yet a believer and leads him in deeper knowledge and purer life. Arminius wrote, "This sanctification is not completed in a single moment; but sin, . . . is weakened more and more by daily losses, . . ."¹⁸ Arminius doubted that man can ever in this life be free from tension in this regard as he wrote, ". . . Man is not *fully and perfectly* regenerate so long as he is in the present life." This, however, must be understood, ". . . as relating not to the essence and essential parts of regeneration itself, but to the degree and measure of the quantity."¹⁹ Further, Arminius had serious questions about the possibility of anyone keeping the law perfectly; whatever of progress a man makes in this direction must be credited to grace.²⁰ In spite of these ideas Arminius insisted that justification — though not a result of work — will be productive of good works. "Faith, and

faith only, (though there is no faith alone without works,) is imputed for righteousness," he wrote.²¹

ARMINIANISM

Arminius was a prophetic figure. This is true not so much in the specific views he declared as in the spirit he represented. Irenic, tolerant, and open-minded he was the harbinger of a new climate that was coming to birth in the Western world, a spirit that would find expression in both secular and religious thought.

After Arminius died (1609) friends who followed his thinking drew up a statement of beliefs, "The Remonstrance" of 1610, in hope of bringing about peace in the church. These summarized Arminius' thought.²² The statements achieved an end opposite that desired. They became the core of a theological battle that ended with the Synod of Dort, 1618-1619. In this synod a strongly Calvinistic confession was adopted and the Arminians were condemned. Those rejected established a denomination which came to be known as the Remonstrant Brotherhood.²³

Arminianism, though rejected at first, was shortly to gain acceptance in other places; however, the directions it took and the ideas associated with the movement were often far removed from the views of Arminius himself. Within less than a century the Anglican Church was reflecting Arminian views in the Books of Homilies, though the Thirty-Nine Articles were firmly Calvinistic in tone.²⁴ Primarily through these homilies Arminian thought was mediated to John Wesley, an ardent champion of Arminian thought.²⁵ Much the same movement could be traced elsewhere.

While there were those such as Wesley who represented a fairly "pure" Arminian thought, Arminianism in due time came to be associated with ideas far removed from those of Arminius. An enquiring attitude and a conciliatory spirit had been marks of the man; now, enemies of Arminius came to associate every movement of free thinking and irenic disposition with Arminianism. Indeed, some of the Remonstrants did move from earlier positions to heterodox views in Christology and anthropology; however, "Arminian" became a pejorative term

which encompassed a host of questionable positions of the Enlightenment period.

An example of this development is seen in the times of Jonathan Edwards. As pastor at Northampton in 1734 he saw in New England a spreading "Arminianism," by which he meant trust in human ability and a libertarianism which led to self-confidence. His preaching of justification by faith alone and against Arminian principles was a key factor in the revival that led to the Great Awakening in New England.

The climate of opinion was, however, against Edwards and in favor of "Arminianism." Even by Edwards' time, for the most part, Arminianism was a prevailing mood. Western man was coming to have confidence in his own abilities. The Arminianism which Edwards feared developed and expanded in the century and one-half after his time. By the twentieth century men had forgotten Arminius, but the spirit and views he represented, as conveyed by those called Arminians, were a part of the mental furniture of the majority of men in the Western world.

¹Geoffrey F. Nuttall, "The Influence of Arminianism in England," in Gerald O. McCulloh, ed., *Man's Faith and Freedom, the Theological Influence of Jacobus Arminius*. (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), p. 46.

²Arminius, *Declaration of Sentiments*, I, 5, in *The Writings of James Arminius*, 3 vols., tr. by James Nichols and W. R. Bagnall (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1956), Vol. I, p. 250.

³*Ibid.*, p. 247.

⁴Arminius, *Nine Questions*, I; *Writings*, I, p. 380.

⁵Arminius, *Declaration of Sentiments*, II; *Writings*, I, pp. 251, 252.

⁶Arminius, *Against the Thirty-one Articles*, VI; *Writings*, I, pp. 293 ff.

⁷*Op. Cit.*, VII, pp. 296 f.

⁸Arminius, *Public Disputations*, VII; *Writings*, I, pp. 485, 486.

⁹*Op. Cit.*, XI; pp. 523, 531.

¹⁰Arminius, *Against the Thirty-One Articles*, IV, 1; *Writings*, I, pp. 287, 288.

¹¹Arminius, *Certain Articles to be Diligently Examined and Weighed*; *Writings*, II, pp. 496, 497.

¹²Arminius, *Against the Thirty-one Articles*, VIII; *Writings*, I, 299-301.

¹³*Op. Cit.*, XII; pp. 316-317.

¹⁴Arminius, *Public Disputations*, XVI; *Writings*, I, pp. 570-574.

¹⁵Arminius, *Declaration of Sentiments*, IX; *Writings*, I, pp. 263, 264.

¹⁶Arminius, *Dissertation on Romans VII*; *Writings*, II, pp. 225-229.

¹⁷Arminius, *Nine Questions*, VII; *Writings*, I, pp. 384, 385.

¹⁸Arminius, *Private Disputations*, XLIX, "On the Sanctification of Man;" *Writings*, II, pp. 119-121.

¹⁹Arminius, *Dissertation on Romans VII*; *Writings*, II, p. 247.

²⁰Arminius, *Declaration of Sentiments*, VII; *Writings*, II, pp. 255, 256.

²¹Arminius, *Letter to Hippolytus a Collibus*, V; *Writings*, II, p. 473.

²²Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1919), Vol. III, pp. 545-549.

²³Lambertus Jacobus van Holk, "From Arminius to Arminianism in Dutch Theology," in Gerald O. McCulloh, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-29.

²⁴See especially Articles X, "Free-Will," and XVII, "Of Predestination and Election."

²⁵John Wesley, "On God's Vineyard," in *Sermons on Several Occasions* (New York: Waugh and T. Mason, 1836), Vol. II, p. 389. Here Wesley declares his dependence on the Homilies "... in setting their judgment on the grand point of justification by faith, ... "





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Introduction to the Current Issue

THE CURRENT issue of the *Ashland Theological Bulletin* is devoted primarily to consideration of the nature of the church. Brethrenism and the Brethren Church receive special attention in this number.

The focal article is "The Genius of Brethrenism" by Dr. Albert T. Ronk. The statements which immediately follow are in response to Dr. Ronk's views. They reflect a variety of thought including appreciation, reaction, and difference in an effort to clarify and apply the genius of Brethrenism to various aspects of ministry to the contemporary world. It is hoped that these presentations will bring thoughtful comment from people who are wrestling with the issues involved.

The concern for the nature of the church is developed from a broader perspective in a consideration of four approaches which might be called "classic views of the church."

Owen H. Alderfer, editor

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The Genius of Brethrenism

ALBERT T. RONK

THE CONCEPTUAL use of Brethrenism in this theme-title does not imply disparagement as do some words suffixed with *-ism*. The basic word carries connotations which alone invest it with dignity. Moreover, the title words in combination are so germane to the theme that the subject is introduced forthwith. This analysis sets itself to disclose the characteristics of Brethrenism as represented in the Brethren movement originating in the German Palatinate in 1708.

Defining it in general, Brethrenism is a characteristic of the true Church from its beginning. It issues from the life and teachings of Jesus. Centuries of time and multitudes of heretical movements have come and gone but the stream of truth, and the holy brotherhood in Christ—true brotherhood—flow on unerringly toward the unknown seas of eternity. The problem of each individual and movement is to be in the stream of both the Truth and the Christian Brotherhood.

A strong indication of some characteristics the Brethrenism of the Schwarzenau Brethren assumed may be gathered from the time and place of their origin. The beginning of the eighteenth century in Germany found the religious atmosphere under a strong challenge of pietistic activity. The developing pietism was the result of Philip Jacob Spener's call for reform in the state churches. His plea was one for renewal of spiritual life and personal piety. His appeal was to *those who wanted to be Christians with all earnestness*. August Herman Francke, somewhat younger but a co-worker with Spener, had experienced a sharp regeneration in conversion. His appeal was to *those who would wrestle in repentance to a clear break with the world*.

It may be denied that Alexander Mack and his little band at Schwarzenau were actually pietists. It is certain that the organization effected in 1708 was not a conventicle of the pietistic

movement. Yet, they were separatists, and were surrounded with such strong pietistic teaching and activity that they expressed pietistic ideas in their meager writings yet extant. Alexander Mack wrote:

True believers and lovers of the Lord Jesus always have their eye singly and strictly directed to their Lord and Master in all things; they wish to follow and obey him in all commands he has given them, and showed them with his own example; and thus they learn in their simplicity to understand the mind of the Master, even in the very smallest matters.¹

When asked about the testimony of the Holy Scriptures and the leading of the Spirit of God, he replied:

"He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" (Rev. 3:22) Thus when a person reads externally the Holy Scriptures and is a believer, whose ears are open, he hears what the Lord Jesus in his doctrine enjoins; he hears what the apostles require in writings, and by this inward hearing he is urged on to observe a true obedience also inwardly.²

Questioned about one's immediate calling as to the source of his convictions "to establish a church," and to those who would affiliate with it, Mack answered:

The immediate calling indeed consists in this, that a man feels inwardly and powerfully assured by the Spirit of God, and is not concerned about it whether men believe it or not.³

The "immediate calling," which an accusing finger pointed to as "establishing a new church," was clarified by Mack when he said:

We have indeed no new church, nor any new laws; but in simplicity and true faith, we desire to remain in the old church which Christ instituted through his blood, and to follow the commandment which was from the beginning.⁴

A strong element in the developing new believing group of Brethren was their growing consciousness of the fecundity of freedom. As separatists from the established churches of Germany—from the creeds, confessions, and constraints—they had freedom, but their freedom was to them a bondage, both their freedom in Christ and their freedom from the former ties. They said, "We have been saved from gross sins by the mighty hand of God;" but in the same breath they declared, "Yet we could not enter the house of God, nor *break the bread in communion of Jesus and his members.*"

Freedom as an abstract concept is useful only as a watchword or battle cry. In concrete application it is bi-directional

with negative and positive principles. There is freedom *from* the things that pall; freedom *for* the conceptual good. Freedom in Christ brought to the Brethren a bondage of love to community. Freedom in possession could only find benediction in brotherhood. Brotherhood becomes the field of action wherein to explore and mature their sense of freedom.

The fellowship effected at Schwarzenau was simple with only those regulations the adherents felt were required to be able to administer the sacraments and identify themselves. Even then the few rules adopted for identify on marriage, work, the ban, and avoidance, were the source of internal troubles and continued so for a century and a half. In fact, the disturbances among the Brethren throughout their history have largely stemmed from excessive rules or attempts to establish them.

Examination of the covenant record of the Brethren formation in 1708, as written by Alexander Mack, Jr., impresses one with the simplicity of the constitutional action. He said, "Eight persons covenanted and united together into the covenant of the cross to form a church of Christian believers."⁵ Those who engaged in the covenant had become disillusioned with the church image of their former affiliation. They searched for words to express their concept of the people of God. They spoke of the faithful as a *household*, and Christ as the *Householder*. The Lord's Church in their thinking was a fellowship and was not entered by joining, but by observing certain rites and by experiencing relationship in the community of the faithful. The chronicler said that they were moved with the "mystery of water-baptism" by immersion and considered it a "door into the church."⁶ They felt that participation in apostolic baptism made them a part of "the old church which Christ instituted." They did not consider they had joined it, but by their obedient faith they had identified with it.

It needs to be said that, according to their own statement, the covenanting Brethren did not believe in *baptismal regeneration*. Their word was that "believers do not look to the power of water in baptism, but rather they look to the power of the Word which has commanded it."⁷

The adhesive element in the solidarity of Brethrenism is the spirit of brotherhood. The looseness in use of the expression *brotherhood* by various secular groups does not mar the concept in its spiritual sense, for it springs from revelation. Speaking of

His own, the Master said, "All ye are brethren." The fathers manifest their spirit by addressing each other as "Brother" or "Sister," and with salutations of the holy kiss, by sacrificial love in ministering to a brother's need, by unity of faith and order, and by communal living. When the course of true Christian love flows into and among the individuals of a fellowship, by-laws become mere statements of facts. The rule of love is transcendent; the loss of it is deadly.

The times of victory in manifestations of the Brethrenism this treatise seeks to magnify are the times of literal application of its principles, precepts, and tenets. They are the times of spiritual growth and outreach in witness. Times of defeat are characterized by absence of rapport and harmony in interpersonal relations. When fervency gives way to formalism and formalism deteriorates to tolerance brotherhood wanes and Brethrenism approaches the vanishing point.

The teaching and preaching and example of those first Brethren flowed through the generations since and have maintained in greater or less degree to the present. Testimonies scattered through the years document this conclusion. A generation after the fact Alexander Mack, Jr., stated that the fathers "have now all departed in peace;" and, there are "churches who bear the same testimony here in America . . ."⁸

Advancing to the year 1781 we read where a gentleman from outside the Brethren circle made a most revealing comment about the Brethren way of life. His assessment is apropos to this analysis of the Brethren genius:

Such Christians I have never seen as they are; so averse are they to all sin, and to many things that other Christians esteem lawful, that they not only refuse to swear, go to war, etc., but are so afraid of doing anything contrary to the commandments of Christ that no temptation would prevail upon them ever to sue any person at law, for either name, character, estate, or debt, be it ever so just.

They are industrious, sober, temperate, kind, charitable people; envying not the great, nor despising the mean. They read much, they sing and pray much, they are constant attendants upon the worship of God. Their dwelling houses are all houses of prayer. They walk in the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless, both in public and in private.⁹

Testimony in assessment of Brethrenism as made by others would not be complete without hearing the deeply considered word of J. Allen Miller. Dr. Miller, having come from a family of Brethren tradition, was in position to make a factual

appraisal of the subject. At editorial invitation in 1915, Miller wrote:

In seeking to characterize what I like to call the spirit and genius of Brethrenism, I always find myself at a loss for words. In the first place this is true because it is a LIFE that I am trying to depict. And what makes this all the more difficult at least for me, is the fact that it is not the life of a particular man or woman but the life of a community that I am trying to describe. Yes, it is a life. To appreciate it one must really enter into it. I am not now speaking of the narrow idiosyncrasies and oft-times ignorant and mistaken notions or customs, local or general, which stifled progress and led to intolerance. But I am thinking of those magnificent traits of Christian conduct, the unfaltering devotion to convictions, the honesty and integrity of character, and loyalty to the Church and the Word of God which silently but powerfully influenced the whole community. I am thinking of the quiet and peaceful life, for the most part rural, which flowed on as a deep stream of spiritual righteousness. The unobstructive and undemonstrative life of the fathers still lives. Absence of emotional outbursts was no evidence of the lack of deep and genuine spiritual feeling. The tear dimmed eye and the trembling hand, the silence of a spirit moved within a shaking body spoke loudly of the Spirit's work. I am thinking too of the simple and the sincere fraternal fellowship that always characterized our people.¹⁰

The insights of the above observers as they contemplated the LIFE of those who had assimilated the doctrines of Brethrenism, are delightfully revealing. However, it must be pointed out that more than "assimilating doctrine" is essential to produce the kind of LIFE that Dr. Miller pictured. There was—and is—the working of the grace of God in the believer both in faith and practice. The LIFE is not a creed, or a confession, or a group membership; it is, in the words of Jesus, "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected in one; . . ." (John 17:23) Phrasing from Dr. Miller: "One must really enter into it to appreciate it" and to feel its enveloping power. The power that envelops, transforms. The genius of *this* Brethrenism is not in the doctrines and practices of the Brethren Church as tradition, but as revealed truth spiritually energized in a consciousness of believing, obeying, and witnessing.

What, then, is the LIFE of this concern? It is, indeed, most difficult to define, describe, or depict. In its origin it is a gift, a changed condition of life in renewal by the touch of God—a gift of life where there was death, and freely given from God to man. In its essence, it is invisible and intangible. In its dynamism of time and space it becomes active in substance—material and personal. Life as a spiritual gift functions through

personality. In its singular aspect, it is personal, individual, solitary; in its plurality life becomes communal, specifically and generally.

The life Dr. Miller held in reference was both individual and communal as the fruit of the pietistic faith translated into life by the people who called themselves Brethren. The faith, held from the beginning in the compulsive movement of a brotherhood, became the genius of the Brethrenism that emerges in life; it emerges, that is, if the individual wills his life after the principles, precepts and tenets of the faith. The tone and degree of success in the *willing* is contingent upon consonance with the Spirit of God.

Constant change as a law of life need not be stated here except in context. Every moving of the Spirit struggles to express itself in the individual personality. Personalization of the principles and precepts of a faith produces a life of stability and service. There is creativity in believing—introjective creativity. Spiritual moving and good intentions will wither and die if they are not expressed objectively. The Brethren refusal to take an oath is more than an abstract principle; it is a practice recognized by law. Non-conformity to the world is more difficult of execution and must allow decisions of conscience as to what is in harmony with being “transformed by the renewing of the mind.” In fact, faith as declared is free from dogma. The principles, precepts, and tenets were adopted by common agreement and have been perpetuated in the same way because of strong convictions that the teachings of the New Testament are to be accepted literally and practiced lifewise.

This Brethrenism accepts written Word (New Testament) as an accurate report of Truth and the Living Word revealed and makes it the focus of its theology. Faithfulness to its theology, its doctrine, its sacramental rites are evidences of an energy of continuity. This basic fact has been recognized throughout the past decades.

To succeed a movement must have an objective, a clear purpose for being, a mission. A definite and stated mission brings it to birth and gives it vigor. Changes that come with passing years may indicate new methods of application and even threaten the basic and original concept. Even though it be pushed into obscurity by neglect the original purpose of mission in the genius of the movement must remain so as to have vitality. The mission of this Brethrenism was to recall apostolic Christianity

in faith and order. It was the mission that sustained the Brethren fathers through the years and produced the kind of lives referred to by both the Reverend Mr. Winchester and Dr. Miller. Any failure of today's Brethrenism to produce outstanding fidelity to its historic position in its living product must be charged to a retreat of its leadership from the original and stated mission. It seems apropos to this analysis to relate the special items of Brethren mission:

They opposed all force in things Christian, taking oaths, membership in oath-bound societies, divorce and remarriage except on one Scriptural ground, engaging in carnal warfare and going to law. They taught careful self-examination for believers, non-conformity to the world and encouraged Scriptural love, Spirit-directed faith and personal obedience to principles of religious living. They practiced baptism by triune immersion of penitent believers for remission of sins, feetwashing, eating of the Lord's Supper (agape), the communion of bread and wine, the Christian salutation of the holy kiss, proper appearance in worship, and anointing with oil for healing with laying on of hands.¹¹

These items of faith and practice, added to general evangelical doctrine, were considered recalled from primitive Christianity to be perpetuated. The considered Brethren mission to practice and teach apostolic doctrines of the sacraments was their only justification for creating a new and distinctive church fellowship. It is a conviction of this writer that the only justification for the continuance of this church fellowship is to practice and teach the same distinctives as the founding fathers did. Affirmation of this settled view of mission in the genius of Brethrenism in this present time and place raises perplexing questions of relevance and methodology. This study cannot develop the substance of either.

The present posture of ecumenicity in the Brethren Church merits a simple statement. Brethren ecumenicity is a child conceived by the exigencies of the present hour and of recent birth. Too long it has rested in unperturbed isolationism. An outstanding effect was the late flowering of a missionary program. Therefore, its koinonia was selfish and sectarian. It is evident now that the babe must not tarry in swaddling cloths but hasten to active youth status under the guidance of its mothering genius. Ecumenicity is the word, not ecumenism. The one denontes koinonia; the other, integration.

¹ Alexander Mack, *Rites and Ordinances* (Ashland, Ohio: Brethren Publishing House, 1939), p. 33.

² *Ibid.*, p. 54.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁹ Elhanen Winchester, quoted in *The Brethren in Colonial America*, Donald F. Durnbaugh, editor (Elgin, Ill.: The Brethren Press, —1967), p. 324.

¹⁰ *Brethren Evangelist*, XXXVII:32, Aug. 18, 1915, p. 3.

¹¹ Frank Gehman, "Our Brethren Purpose," a leaflet, p. 2.
(Deposited in the Gehman File, Archives, Ashland Theological Seminary.)

Responses to "The Genius of Brethrenism"

1. Theological Education and The Genius of Brethrenism

JOSEPH R. SHULTZ

IT IS a privilege and pleasure to respond to Dr. Ronk's article "The Genius of Brethrenism." The supreme value of this research and writing is in the fact that it is the work of a man who has both lived it since the beginning of the modern movement and still loves it. There is inherent value in his seeking to define the life, mind, and mission of The Brethren Church in an ecumenical age when all established doctrines and principles are being questioned. It is most relevant for even those who are in full accord with the Church to excavate and examine the foundations in order to reaffirm the faith and determine the nature of mission for the twenty-first century.

Before I seek to develop the implication of this article for theological education, I would want to examine certain emphases in the article. First of all, it would be necessary to qualify the entire approach of placing Brethrenism in the context of Pietism. In recent years many good articles have been written concerning the origins of Brethrenism in relation to Pietism, the Reformed, and Anabaptism. The weight of evidence would force us to do no less than consider that Brethrenism at best was eclectic and did not emanate from one pure stream. The very fact that it organized itself into a church is a strong indication that Anabaptism had a significant influence among its early members. It is undoubtedly true that Brethrenism does have a strong element of Pietism. However, there is also abundant evidence even today that Brethrenism was also influenced by many aspects in the movement of the Radical Reformation.

Secondly, Dr. Ronk's statement concerning the mission of the church is far too restrictive. The statement, "The considered

Brethren mission to practice and teach apostolic doctrines of the sacraments was the only justification for creating a new and distinctive church fellowship," is not documented. Further, "It is the conviction of this writer that the only justification for the continuance of this church fellowship is to practice and teach the same distinctives as the founding fathers did" is far too restrictive and tends to sacerdotalism and religious legalism.

The reverse side of these statements necessarily reads that other churches are not practicing the "Apostolic doctrines of the sacraments." This is most difficult to demonstrate from either a traditional or exegetical view point. The church historian Dr. Donald Durnbaugh clearly demonstrates that one of the primary principles for the origin of the Believers' Church was the "fall of the Church." The Christian bodies formed out of Radical Protestantism were convinced of the total lack of discipleship and quality of life within Christendom.¹ But to imply that The Brethren Church holds the "sola" apostolic doctrine of sacrament and that this is the reason for continued existence is unfounded. The reason for existence, even within Christendom, is total Gospel mission.

Now the implications for theological education arising out of the article are contained in the phrase, "this Brethrenism accepts the written word (New Testament) as an accurate report of truth and the living word revealed, and makes it the focus of its theology." Pietism, not Lutheranism or Calvinism, coined the term "Biblical theology." Spener in *Pia Desideria*² uses the term "Biblical theology" and later created the antithesis of dogmatic theology and scholastic theology. The fact that this term was invented within the stream of Pietism at the time of the working out of the Radical Reformation is of vital importance to all Reformation history as well as to Brethren history. As Gerhard Ebling suggests, one would have thought that Lutheranism or Calvinism would have coined the term since the basis of the Reformation was "sola scriptura" in contrast to the concept of "tradition" of the Roman Catholic Church.³ The term "Biblical theology" was coined to distinguish a type of Christian life and theology based on the straightforward approach to Scripture in contrast to theology based on presuppositions of philosophy and tradition. The term was coined to declare a simple faith based on the commonly accepted truths in Scripture, and upon the principle of the priesthood of all believers within Radical Protestantism. This was in contrast to

the Reformation doctrines and orthodox dogmatics which had become completely immersed in scholastic form. Ebeling also writes, "Biblical theology is the slogan of a programme of theological reform which directs its criticism neither at the content of Orthodox dogmatics nor at its methodological form as systematic theology, but only at certain accretions, namely, at the fact that, as Spener says, there has been 'much introduced into theology which is alien, useless and savors more of the wisdom of the world,' 'presumptuous subtleties in matters where we ought not to be wise above the scriptures.'"⁴

In the volume *Types of Modern Theology*, H. R. Mackintosh refers to a similar aversion at another point in Church history: "Barth holds, not unjustly as I think, that the all but openly professed purpose of much contemporary theology has been to satisfy the human intelligence—its religious, moral, and even aesthetic assumptions—rather than to understand, obey, and set forth the Word of God. Roman and Protestant alike have found the supreme criterion of preaching, not in Scripture, but in the mind of the living Church. . . They can become wholly oblivious of the truth that the Church and its mind stand perpetually under the authority and judgment of God's Word."⁵ The inference from Mackintosh and his quotation of Barth reveal the force behind the term Biblical theology as initiated and continued in the movement of the Believers Church—and the Brethren Church.

Therefore, a primary implication for theological education for Brethrenism as it emanates from Biblical theology is that serious exegetical study of Scripture must be effected at the core of the curriculum. Since the Pietistic element of Brethrenism rejects both tradition and creeds, it is essential to realize the "authority" of Scripture. To leave this would result in a radical individualism or social and religious liberalism. Granted, this position does not resolve all textual problems and hermeneutical questions, but it does preserve a sympathetic context whereby Scripture and doctrine problems can be approached without negativism and outright rejection. Brethrenism by this very nature seeks a commitment of "trust" in the part of both professor and preacher. An attitude of faith in the inspiration and authority of Scripture is the matrix for Christian teaching and worship. In the ultimate sense, Brethrenism does not rely upon an orthodox dogma of "inspiration" but upon the self vindication, the inherent authority of Scripture through the Holy Spirit.

A second implication (logically, not chronologically) for theological education for Brethrenism stemming from Biblical theology is that each generation must study its church doctrine in order to reaffirm or reform it. The genius in Biblical theology is that Scripture exegesis never becomes normative but always remains historical. This is most adequately illustrated in the Brethren's position of never adopting an ecumenical creed and holding the motto: "The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible." Creeds were rejected not because Brethren rejected the cardinal doctrines of Christianity but because they believed "new light" might come. Dr. Durnbaugh writes in *Brethren Life and Thought*, "Within the context of the 'inner word' one can see the persistent Brethren concern for remaining open for new understanding of the mind of Christ. These, of course, are to be expected within the frame work of the 'Outer Word' or the Scripture."⁶

The very essence of Pietism presupposes a personal living approach to Scripture and precludes abstract theology. Scripture in the heart of Brethrenism is "God speaking." Brethren are not timid to admit to the inexplicable, and acknowledge the "mystery" in the revelation of God in Christ. The theology of paradox of D. M. Baillie illustrates a certain mind in Brethrenism. An example is, "The Incarnation presents us indeed with the supreme paradox, and I do not believe that we can ever eliminate from it the element of paradox without losing the Incarnation itself."⁷

There are times when this Brethren nontheological attitude is interpreted as anti-intellectual or irrational. However, Brethrenism would answer that faith itself is a valid theological method, more viable than the dogmatic orthodoxy.

Positing the concept of Biblical Theology Brethrenism affects not only the position of Scripture, but also the formation of Christian theology. The early writings of the Brethren everywhere give evidence to the importance of the "inner Word" as well as the "outer Word." The study of Church history also teaches that this is not unique with Brethren but was used by Spener, Menno, and even Calvin. For all of these Reformation and Radical Reformation bodies the illumination of the Holy Spirit was prerequisite to the proper reading and interpretation of Scripture.

Therefore, it is imperative to understand that Brethrenism formed Christian theology out of life, rather than life out of

Christian theology. The experience of new life and discipleship was the ground for forming Christian belief. Mack writes, "Son. But I have heard it asserted that all sects appeal to Scripture, and hence one could not maintain his faith by Scripture? Father. Whosoever says this, because all sects appeal to Scripture, that therefore a true believer should not do the same, such must necessarily be a miserably ignorant person. For it is to a believer a strong support of his faith to know that all sects acknowledge the holy scripture as divine, and appeal to it, though they do not believe it (scripturally) . . . true believers have learned of their Lord and Master more and better wisdom."⁸ From this it could be said that "life" not "logic" was the final testimony to eternal truth. This is not to say that the theology of Brethrenism was illogical but to assert the limitations of the best of reason and the self vindication of the new life in Christ. Brethrenism was always willing to accept "mystery" at the edge of reason. To Brethrenism viable theology is the living doctrine in the life of the "true" believer. This whole theological concept harmonizes with Brethren emphasis on experience, discipleship, and the "agape of Koinonia." The genuine Christian fellowship of the Brethren was—and is—the most important "doctrine" and is prerequisite to all other cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith.

The early concept of Biblical theology also contained the sense of historical truth. By this it is meant that Christian theology is subject to further "light." It is opened and never becomes so normative that it cannot be changed. Again this is the reason for non-creedalism in Brethrenism. The New Testament was their only "creed," and its interpretation can never be completed.

The Brethren were sensitive enough to realize that when any generation forms a creed (or statement of faith) which necessarily is a living thing out of their experience, it cannot be made normative for the next generation who have not necessarily had the identical experiences. Faith and testimony to Christian experience are the primary items which can be willed from one Christian generation to the next—besides the New Testament. Therefore, the theological implication is that schools of theology in the tradition of Biblical theology must always seek for and insist upon "life" as well as the "words." The scripture, "But grow in grace, and in knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ" is explicit in placing "grace" first in the process of theological education.

Undoubtedly there are other theological implications which one could respond to in the article "The Genius of Brethrenism." The ones presented seem to be basic and most vital to other responses. It is hoped that this article would invite "response to the response." And if this response is not sufficient, it is because of the insufficiency of the author, not the subject. May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with us always.

¹ Donald F. Durnbaugh, *The Believers' Church* (New York, Macmillan Co. 1968), p. 212.

² Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, ed. Riut Aland, in *Kleine Texte*, fiu Varlesungen und Ubungen, No. 170, Berlin, 1940, pp. 25f.

³ Gerhard Ebeling, *Word and Faith*, (Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1963) pp. 79-97.

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 84.

⁵ Hugh Ross Mackintosh, *Types of Modern Theology*, (New York, Scribners, n.d., pref. 1937) pp. 269-70.

⁶ Donald F. Durnbaugh, "Brethren and The Authority of the Scriptures," *Brethren Life and Thought*, (Oak Brook, Illinois, Brethren Journal Association), Vol. XIII, September, 1968, No. 3, p. 174.

⁷ D. M. Baillie, *God Was In Christ*, (London, Faber & Faber, 1961) p. 106.

⁸ Alexander Mack, *Rites and Ordinances*, (Ashland, Ohio, A New English Translation With Memoirs of the Author, 1939). p. 51.

2. Christian Education and The Genius of Brethrenism

FREDERICK T. BURKEY

FROM TIME to time it is helpful to re-examine both doctrine and distinctive practice as they relate to the church's tradition and its contemporary mission. If The Brethren Church is to survive the vigorous challenges of this secular age, it must establish its identity and clearly perceive its mission. Therefore, studies in denominational history and thought are prerequisite to the intelligent determination of the content of the church's message and the shape of its ministry. Because Brethren must participate in constructive discussions aimed at producing a more effective ministry in a rapidly changing world, I welcome the opportunity to respond to Dr. Albert T. Ronk's article, "The Genius of Brethrenism."

In his treatment of the "genius" of Brethrenism, Dr. Ronk has attempted to delineate those characteristic beliefs and practices which distinguish the Christian heritage of The Brethren Church from that of other Protestant bodies. Generally, however, these beliefs and practices correspond closely with the recognized traits of the Anabaptists and the various bodies which are identified with the Believers' Church tradition.¹ None of these "distinctives" really sets the German Baptist Brethren apart from other evangelical groups.

I. THE GENIUS OF BRETHRENISM: Christian Brotherhood in Quest of Truth

Such records as we now possess indicate that the founders of the German Baptist Brethren movement were a quiet, serious, evangelical people whose religious ambition was to be completely obedient to the teachings of the New Testament. Profoundly influenced by their Bible studies and by the decadence of the state churches in Germany, they felt unable to accept either the rigid creedal statements or the ritualistic worship offered by established religious bodies.²

With the Bible as their guide, they set out to recover the faith and order of the New Testament. As they approached this task, they did so in a spirit of Christian brotherhood and love, accepting one another as new creatures in Christ while maintaining an attitude of openness to the leading of the Spirit in the interpretation of the Scriptures. It was their obedient search for new understanding in a spirit of *agape* such as could not be generated by human will or effort, but by God only, that made the Brethren a distinctive group in the eyes of their contemporaries. Herein is found the "genius" of Brethrenism.

II. A CRITIQUE OF THE TRADITIONAL VIEW OF THE BRETHREN GENIUS

While Dr. Ronk does, in some measure, stress "brotherhood" as an important aspect of Brethrenism, this concept seems to be gradually forced into the background by his emphasis on rites and ordinances. For instance, he implies that brotherhood is achieved by "observing certain rites" first and then "experiencing relationship in the community of the faithful." Thus we infer that the "genius" of the movement lies primarily in the observation of the "certain rites" rather than in the atmosphere of Christian brotherhood and spirit of openness so clearly associated with true Brethrenism. Dr. Ronk concludes his article on the same note by stating that the sole justification for the continuation of this movement is limited to the practice and teaching of the "apostolic doctrines of the sacraments." He thus assumes both that the founders possessed full apostolic understanding of these doctrines and that no further light on these matters can be derived from a study of the New Testament.

While his approach presents the traditional Brethren view of its own "genius," it does seem to obscure those qualities which made Brethrenism unique. This definition of the Brethren "genius" had its genesis within months after the initial baptism at Schwarzenau in the late summer or fall of 1708. The hostile state-church power structure and the presence of the constantly debating Anabaptistic and pietistic groups forced the Brethren to develop an apologetic to meet the challenges of that day.

Because the moral and ethical standards of the established churches of era were questionable at best, they were scarcely in a position to criticize the life style of the Brethren.³ Consequent-

ly, their only recourse was to attack the modes of observing the ordinances developed by the Brethren.⁴ The historical record of the Church bears numerous entries describing vociferous controversies focusing more, unfortunately, on the merits of "trine immersion" or the re-immersion of new members than on the real issues: believers' immersion, Christian brotherhood, and receptivity to new understandings derived from a serious study of the Word.

Over the years, these heated disputes, some with those of other religious persuasion and others among Brethren, accomplished something which the founding fathers greatly feared and strenuously opposed in the established churches of their day. For, the Brethren became so preoccupied with defending their particular modes of administering the ordinances that the original attitude of openness of new "light" in the context of Christian brotherhood and mutual acceptance was lost. These distinctive modes soon became, and to some extent continue to be thought of as tests of fellowship and fidelity rather than expressions of faith and obedience.⁵ Somehow the original Brethren mission to "recall apostolic Christianity in faith and order" seems to have been reduced to a kind of narrow ecclesiasticism based on an eighteenth century apologetic.

III. RECOVERY OF THE "GENIUS" THROUGH CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Evangelical Christian education is an orderly, ongoing process which is designed to lead all men to a knowledge and acceptance of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord; to guide them in performing the worshipping, witnessing, teaching, and ministering responsibilities of the church; and to direct them, in a fellowship of love, toward spiritual maturity. Ever flexible, always probing for deeper understanding in every facet of the life and work of the believer, evangelical Christian education possesses the ingredients necessary for maintaining a spirit of openness and vitality within the brotherhood. Whenever, throughout the history of Brethrenism, its "genius" has been most evident, there has been an effective educational program.

Prior to the intellectual dark ages of Brethrenism (roughly 1776-1882) the German Baptist Brethren were deeply committed to the study of the scriptures. Dr. Martin C. Brumbaugh records that "There is evidence to justify the claim that

the Germantown congregation had a Sabbath school before 1738.”⁶ Later, “In 1744, Christopher Saur printed a collection of 381 tickets, upon each one of which is a scripture quotation and a stanza of religious poetry by Gerhard Tersteegen. These were evidently used in the Brethren’s Sunday school.”⁷

Unfortunately, with the destruction of the Saur press in Philadelphia during the Revolutionary War, the stream of German language religious literature nearly evaporated. Consequently, the Brethren sought to maintain their identity, not by pursuing a common search for truth, but in isolation from the rest of the world. Very soon they were withdrawn “into a shell of illiteracy and distinctive dress.”⁸ This produced a kind of provincialism which found expression in the strenuous opposition of many influential church leaders to the establishment of Sunday schools and high schools which they claimed were “not in harmony with the teachings of Christ and the apostles, nor with the ancient view of the church.”⁹

Honest inquiry was greeted with unbelievable suspicion. One group petitioned the annual conference “to advise Brethren Quinter and Kurtz and H. R. Holsinger to publish nothing in their periodicals that disputes the practice of the precepts and ordinances of the gospel, as handed down to us by Christ and the apostles, through and by the forefathers of the church.”¹⁰ The conference of 1869 agreed and warned that publication of controversial articles “will subject a brother to the counsel of the church.”¹¹

Reacting to the intellectual rigor mortis of nineteenth century Brethrenism, Henry R. Holsinger led the progressives in a concerted attempt to recover the true “genius” of the Church. Quite naturally, one of the prominent elements of this renewal movement was the development of a Sunday school program.¹²

Christian education unbound by tradition and conduct in a spirit of openness and honest searching played an integral role in the recovery of the “genius” of Brethrenism and in the subsequent growth of The Brethren Church in the years immediately following the 1882 schism.

Today, when many learned men are proclaiming that “God is Dead” and that the Sunday school is a relic of the past, we are witnessing a growing sentiment for church renewal. Such titles as “The Taste of New Wine,” “New Life in the Church,” “Call to Commitment,” “The Integrity of Church Membership,”

and "Nine Roads to Renewal" are flooding the religious literature market. People from diverse Christian backgrounds are searching for—and in some cases finding—renewal within the church. Almost without exception, the prominent renewalists stress the importance of educating the laity for responsible participation in the mission of the ministry of the church.

Keith Miller, author of "Taste of New Wine," calls for "a new kind of honesty" in Sunday school classes. He says of his own church, "We just had an unspoken agreement not to press the truth—when it seemed that the truth might hurt the leaders or someone else's feelings—or really rock the boat."¹³

This new kind of honesty in life, Bible study, and in prayer "inevitably drives a man, sooner or later, out of the privacy of his soul, beyond the circle of his little group of Christian friends and across the barriers between social, racial and economic strata to find the wholeness, the real closeness of Christ in that involvement with the lives of His lost and groping children whoever and wherever they may be."¹⁴ THIS IS RENEWAL! This kind of renewal is desperately needed in Brethren Churches today.

The Brethren Church can be renewed, it "genius" can be restored through Christian education, but in so doing, many cherished traditions must be carefully scrutinized. Such scrutiny is never without agony (or opposition) but if The Brethren Church is a Believers' Church, evangelical and open in life and witness, there is nothing to fear. For this scrutinizing process will be carried out within the body of believers, in a spirit of Christian charity, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit of God.

As we discipline ourselves to a Christian education characterized by a "willingness to receive further improvement" which was typical of Colonial Brethrenism,¹⁵ churchmen will discover that they possess something of infinitely more value to share with the world than certain distinctive modal approaches to the Biblical ordinances. This "something" that transcends traditional modalism is embodied in the Christian's relationship with the "infinite, all-wise, all-powerful, all-loving God who has revealed himself by means natural and supernatural in creation, in the nature of man, in the history of Israel and in the Church, in the pages of Holy Scripture, in the incarnation of God in Christ, and in the heart of the believer by the Gospel."¹⁶

This daily walk with God is the goal of Christian education which, if realized, will perpetuate the "genius of Brethrenism" and provide the basis for renewal of the Church.

¹ See: Franklin H. Littell, *The Origins Of Sectarian Protestantism* (New York: Macmillan, 1964), p. 82f., and Donald F. Durnbaugh, *The Believers' Church* (New York: Macmillan, 1968), p. 32f.

² See: Donald F. Durnbaugh, comp., tr., *European Origins Of The Brethren* (Elgin, Ill.: Brethren Press, 1958), p. 324.

³ *Ibid.*, see pp. 27-30.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 124ff.

⁵ See: *A Manual Of Procedure For The Brethren Church*, p. 9, Section E.

⁶ Martin G. Brumbaugh, *A History Of The Brethren* (Elgin, Ill.: Brethren Publishing House, 1907), p. 180.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

⁸ Albert T. Ronk, *History Of The Brethren Church* (Ashland, O.: Brethren Publishing Co., 1968), p. 14.

⁹ Henry R. Holsinger, *History Of The Tunkers And The Brethren Church* (Oakland, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1901), p. 437.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 420.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 423.

¹² Ronk, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

¹³ Keith Miller, *Taste Of New Wine* (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1965), p. 21.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

¹⁵ See: Albert T. Ronk. "A Philosophy of Brethren Church History," *Ashland Theological Bulletin*, Vol. I, No. 1 (Spring 1968), p. 5.

¹⁶ Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Christian Evidences* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1953), p. 33.

3. Pastoral Ministry and the Genius of Brethrenism

RICHARD E. ALLISON

THE "genius" of any sectarian group within the Christian context is to be found in its contribution to Christianity as a whole. The early Christians were not defenders of what had been in Old Testament Judaism. Instead they built on this past and pushed forward under the direction of the Holy Spirit. A part of their genius was their freedom to Holy Spirit guidance. They had not become hardened in their cultic practices to the point where they were no longer available for pioneering under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit used the instrument of the early church to do a new thing. However, it must be remembered that what eventuated had its roots in the past. The actual happening was a natural fruition of what had already taken place. In other words, it was a part of the continuing activity of the Spirit and not an abrogation of all that had preceded.

The early church was faithful to the message that was the natural extension of the Old Testament and included what God was continuing to do in and through Jesus Christ. While the roots are to be found in the old, the early church came into being through a response to the new.

A group of eight under the direction of Alexander Mack in 1708 founded a new group within the circumference of Christianity. They did not claim to be "the Church" but desired to be a part of the old Church instituted by Christ. The manner in which they proceeded was that of reconstitutionism. Such a process can easily lead to nostalgia over the past. Then one's judgment becomes impaired and he makes glowing statements which have no basis in fact but which exist only in imagination about history.

This often happens as one views Pietism from the position of the present day. This is to miss the point of Pietism. Pietism sought to establish true piety. It was not nostalgic. It was cognizant of its own matrix. It was not defensive in its approach, but offensive. While not being a conventicle of Pietism, the early Brethren developed a style of life that was marked by the pietistic movement. Emphasis was placed on regeneration, a vigorous spiritual life and personal piety.

In the process of reconstituting the church, one returns to the early church and its history in Acts. There one finds no definition of the church. Instead, word pictures of it in action define its mission.

The first concept encountered in Acts 2:41 ff. is that embodied in the word *kerygma*. *Kerygma* refers to the message, the proclamation, the core. An inductive study of Peter's message at Pentecost with the other messages in Acts (3:11-26; 4:5-12; 7; 8:26-40; 10:34-43; 13:13-31) yields the following core:

- a. Jesus is the fulfillment of that spoken in the Old Testament.
- b. He vindicated himself through miracles signs and wonders.
- c. He died by crucifixion.
- d. He was resurrected from death and the grave.
- e. He was exalted.
- f. The call to repentance.
- g. The warning of judgment.

The *kerygma* provided a link to the past. By the *kerygma* continuity is maintained with what God has been doing down through history. This is the area where faithfulness is demanded. Brethren emphasis at this point is apparent from such often quoted phrases as "The New Testament is our guide to faith and practice." "No creed but the New Testament."

The church was and is to be a proclaiming community. Its message is to be proclaimed with power and simplicity. Its members are to live lives of discipleship clearly reflecting the message. All of this has implications for Christian outreach. A depersonalized society is looking for a sure and certain word from the Lord, a message tested by the ages, a message that is lived and not merely verbalized.

The second concept found in Acts 2:41 ff. is summed up in the word *ecclesia*. One of the earliest and most persistent themes in the Old Testament is that of Israel as a "chosen" people. From the time of the Exodus, the Hebrew people developed an awareness of themselves as an especially chosen community.

This same idea is found in the New Testament but applies to the church. *Ecclesia* is the term chosen to describe the Christian Community. From Pentecost on, the followers of Jesus came to a self-conscious awareness of themselves as a unique community. Those who had been with Christ, who had come to a new relationship with God through Him now became conscious of their new relationship with one another. This was not man's idea. It was the creation of God. First God chose a nation, but that nation out of pride, prejudice and blindness refused to be a blessing to other nations. Then God turned to a chosen people, taken not from one nation but consisting of the believers of many nations, the Church. The *ecclesia* is a community made up of persons who have been called forth by Him.

The concept of *ecclesia* added to *kerygma* tends to temper the individualism engendered by the call to repentance in the latter. This same individualism is encouraged by the emphasis placed on regeneration by the Pietests.

The *ecclesia* is the community of called out ones, or, in other words, those who have responded positively to the proclamation. For Brethren, the emphasis is on community as opposed individualism. With regards to outreach it implies that invitation is to community instead of individual salvation. The latter is not denied but the former is given preeminence.

The third concept found in Acts 2:41 ff. is an anticipated extension of the former ones. It describes the nature and life of the Christian community. *Koinonia* is often translated "fellowship" but this word fails to convey the life-sharing activities of the community of faith. Many of the superficial activities of the organized church are brought to mind by the word fellowship. However, as Paul points out in I Corinthians 12:26, the church is a body of believers that are so closely joined that if "one suffers, all suffer; or if one is honored all rejoice together".

A major factor in the genuine atmosphere for outreach is fellowship vertically and horizontally. Fellowship provides in-

ward stability which enables Christians to perform their mission. It undergirds and assists individuals in performing their mission with boldness and compassion. In this fellowship the new believer can grow in grace and function properly as a child of God. *Koinonia* is a fellowship of love, acceptance and forgiveness.

The Brethren are a fellowship people. Liturgical leanings find little support from Brethren tradition. Our strength is found in that we have learned to bare our souls before God and each other. A world that has been conditioned to live behind a mask is willing to take a second look at a fellowship of love, acceptance and forgiveness. A world that has lost its personhood suddenly becomes alive in an atmosphere of love, acceptance and forgiveness.

A fourth concept important to understanding the church and its genius from the New Testament standpoint is found in the term *diakonia*. The church does not exist for itself. It exists to loose itself in service. Just as the head of the church "came not to be served: He came to serve and to give His life to redeem many people," (Mark 10:45 TEV) so the church was meant to lose itself in mission or else become a museum for antiquated piety. The church does not exist to perpetuate itself. The separated life dare not become and end in itself. This produces a ghetto religion, the self-righteousness of the pharisee, the exclusiveness of the saved. *Diakonia* involves the community of faith in the concerns of the world. Through service the church wins the right to proclaim the Good News. And through service the Good News becomes understandable to all levels of society.

Pietism injected a lethargic, majesterial church with a shot of mission serum. Orphanages were opened, schools were built, missionary societies began operation under the instigation of pietistic forces. Brethren have always been a practical people, more inclined to serve than to refine a theology. And today we live in a world that is more impressed with work than words. Problems of racism, violence, war, and poverty confront us and await the application of Christian love. The world in which we live is crying for a revelation of God's love and the application of God's love in terms it can understand. This is a call to *diakonia*. This service is not simply something the church does, but something the church is.

What then is the genius of the Brethren Church?

1. Its openness to the leading of the Spirit.
2. Its acknowledgement of Scriptural authority.
3. Its brotherly style of life.
4. Its willingness to spend itself in service.

What is the contribution that Brethren can make to the Christian scene? Some of the earliest practices of the Brethren commend themselves today as the ones most likely to prove adequate for the day in which we live.

A society bombarded by claims and counter claims from mass media longs to hear a word spoken with authority by the Creator of all things. A populace of joiners yearns for the knowledge that they are becoming God's people for eternity. The lonely crowd needs fellowship. A bleeding, hungry, impoverished world longs for compassionate understanding and help.

Some Classic Views of the Church

OWEN H. ALDERFER

TO THOSE who have devoted time to thought and study about the nature of the church it is readily evident that a number of views have developed and peristed over the years. While giving specific attention to the Brethren views of the church in this issue of the *Bulletin*, it seems appropriate that other views be indicated which have existed over long periods of time in widespread movements.

The concern of this study is the essential nature of the church—the church as the church. One's view of what the church is will, indeed, affect his view of everything to which the church is related. If we can discover some "classic views" of the church, it is assumed that it can readily be seen how the various views will work out in the respective relationships.

The approach to this study is historical and theological: It will attempt to locate in time views of the church that have lasted across the years and have influenced the church in various geographic sections or theological streams. The study will attempt, furthermore, to trace out the thought of the several views, suggesting directions in which the respective views may lead insofar as the church in its relationships is concerned. The study takes up classic views beginning with the most ancient views, the Eastern and the Western, leading to the Eastern Orthodox and the Roman Catholic. From there the study moves to two Protestant views, the Lutheran and the Reformed.

THE EASTERN VIEW OF THE CHURCH: THE MYSTICAL VIEW

By "Eastern view" of the church this study refers to a general attitude which grew up in Christianity east of the Adriatic, in Greek speaking parts of Christianity during the first seven Christian centuries. It is not easy to delineate a

specific "Eastern view" of the church because of the mood characteristic of the developing church in that part of Christianity. This attitude did not lend itself of official systematization and legal codes which defined the church and governed its development. The Eastern church is characterized more by a spirit than any clear abiding formulation of a doctrine of the church. Still, it is appropriate to try to grasp that spirit as it indicates a view of the church.

In the early centuries of Christianity, characterizing features began to develop within the church in the eastern Mediterranean which set it apart from the church in the West. The East, productive of a host of great Christian thinkers and writers, walked in the spirit of the Greek heritage to which it was indebted. The speculation of the philosopher, the mystical quality of Platonism, the imagery of the poet and dramatist, the individualism of the early democracy united with a trust in persons more than in laws—all these contributed to the attitude of Christian writers of the East. Eastern names—Origen, Athanasius, the Cappadocian Fathers, Cyril of Alexandria, and Eusebius of Caesarea, to name a few—are associated with the metaphysical speculation which led to the profound theological issues coming to focus in the ecumenical councils.

Preoccupation with the Logos, often interpreted in Neoplatonic modes, and concern with salvation emphasizing immortality became the central themes of Eastern thought. Athanasius' writing summarizes the thinking of the East in these areas in a few sentences in *Of the Incarnation*:

He was made man that we might be made God and He manifested Himself by a body that we might receive the idea of the unseen Father; and He endured the insolence of men that we might inherit immortality.¹

Athanasius is saying that the manifesting of the Logos is a fact, but more: it is a lesson, a symbol, a sacrament. Christ is seen as being born in us, dwelling in us, permeating us with spiritual life. To such concerns the Eastern church devoted its attention; it endeavored to fathom the mysteries of the world above. The practical focus of the church—if practical it may be called—came to be the realization and enjoyment of these mysteries in personal experience through reason and liturgy.

To this point the study has dealt with philosophical backgrounds and theological concerns of the Eastern church rather

than with an Eastern view of the church. In such a setting, however, and in the absence of an explicated ecclesiology, the Eastern view of the church is to be discovered. M. J. Congar discusses the development of a view of the church in the East and suggests reasons why greater development did not occur:

The thought of Eastern ecclesiology from the first envisages in the mystery of the church that which it encompasses of the divine realities rather than the earthly aspects and the human implications. It focuses upon the inner reality of the unity in faith and love rather than the concrete demands of the ecclesiastical communion. One observes the relatively weak development of the ecclesiology of the Greek Fathers; the truth is that these have dwelt in a large measure upon Christology and even more upon pneumatology. They see the church in Christ and in the Holy Spirit rather than in its ecclesiastical being as such.²

Arising from these ideas in Eastern Christianity is what may be called a mystical view of the church. John Oman sees this as “. . . the idea of the Church as primarily a mysterious hierurgical saving institution.”³ The church is a means whereby the ideas and experiences of the divine realms—the real world—are communicated to men. Indeed, as the future concerns of the Eastern church would show, there must be concerns for truth—orthodoxy, the law of God, and clerical orders, but these are of value only as they contribute to experiencing the relation to Christ and the attainment of immortality through Him.

Such a view of the church resulted in the development of an extensive liturgy as an aid to the attainment of spiritual reality. Congar in his work *After Nine Hundred Years* shows that the Eastern church across the years has placed great value on “a line of descent from celestial realities to the midst of the sensible world,” so that there developed “a rather sumptuous liturgy, imbued with Holy Mysteries and the idea of ‘Heaven on Earth.’ It was a church essentially sacramental, a church of prayer with less attention to the exigencies of its militant and its itinerant state.”⁴

Father Congar has implied some of the results which tend to flow from a mystical view of the church: Elaborate liturgy developed, the incarnating of divine ideas to raise men’s minds to God. The life of devotion, including the elevation of asceticism, found stress. Individualism expressed within the framework of the church resulted, minimizing the role of corporate worship. The same mood carried over into the structures

of the church: priestly and episcopal organization never attained an established unity for the whole church. The church developed into a number of communities belonging to various states. Out of this situation, in many cases, the church became subordinated to the state.

From this brief study of the Eastern church, it may be generalized that a mystical view of the church tends toward a focus upon divine realities. It stresses personal experience of the divine provisions in opening to the individual various degrees of depth in realization. It lends itself to individualism—concern for personal experience unrelated to other persons. It holds the danger of unrelatedness to the present world.

THE WESTERN VIEW OF THE CHURCH: THE HIERARCHIAL VIEW

As described above, the eastern part of the church developed its own peculiar thought and patterns leading to the structure known as the Eastern Orthodox branch of Christendom. So also, the western part of the church developed according to its thought and patterns into the Roman Catholic branch of Christendom, greatly influencing subsequent developments in all Western Christianity. Because this is a part of our more immediate heritage than the Eastern, this story is a more familiar one to us.

The Western view of the church is more easily traced out than the Eastern because a progression of Western Fathers wrote explicitly on the nature of the church. Here theological and practical overtones are present; as the vision of the church developed—often out of a current controversy—new statements were presented to clarify and crystallize thinking on the church. Later writers built upon their predecessors; sometimes they invested the earlier writings with new meanings. Ideas from several of the Western Fathers should be noted to show progress in thought concerning the church.

Irenaeus (died c. 200) gathers up the main second century ideas of the church and presents an outline of developing views. In *Against Heresies* he wrote, "Where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God; and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church and all grace; . . ." ⁵ The church is the sole repository of truth; this is the case because it holds the apostolic faith

and the apostolic writings. In a passage later to be much used and abused, he illustrated his case by the Roman church, the church founded by Peter and Paul. It represents Christendom in miniature.⁶ Others, such as Tertullian (died c. 220), reflect similar ideas, stressing the soleness of the church and the deposit of faith guaranteed by an unbroken succession of bishops.

In Cyprian of Carthage (died 258) the Western view of the church advances notably. Writing at the time of the Novationist schism Cyprian stressed the unity of the church and noted that this was a unity maintained through the bishops who stand in the place of the apostles.⁷ The church is founded on the bishops of which Peter is the first; it is "united and held together by the glue of the mutual cohesion of the bishops."⁸ Reasoning from here he argues that one "cannot have God for his father who has not the Church for his mother." There is no salvation outside the church represented by the bishops in proper succession; furthermore, rebellion against the bishop is rebellion against God.⁹ Here is a practical legal approach to the doctrine of the church. Clearly inherent in Cyprian's doctrine is much that will harden into medieval and later Catholic views of the church.

The Western church is indebted more to St. Augustine of Hippo (died 430) than to any other single person for the development of its doctrine of the church. Forced to deal with these issues by the Donatist controversy, Augustine wrote extensively on the nature of the church. He accepted the teachings relative to the church current in his time: the church is the bride of Christ, the mother of Christians; there is no salvation apart from it; the church is equated with the universal Catholic Church with its hierarchy and sacraments, and its center is at Rome. Augustine's unique contributions are in three areas: (1) His view of the mystical relationship of the church to Christ—the body to the Head. (2) His conception that the church's unity follows logically as a fellowship of love; schism, therefore, is sacrilege, the rending of the church by lack of charity. (3) His distinction between the essential church composed of those who genuinely belong to Christ and the outward empirical church which includes sinners—the distinction between the church visible and the church invisible.¹⁰

In a definitive work on early historical theology, J. N. D. Kelly observes that, "By the middle of the fifth century the Ro-

man Church had established *de jure* as well as *de facto*, a position of primacy in the West, and the papal claims to supremacy over all bishops of Christendom had been formulated in precise terms."¹¹ Upon this framework of a hierarchical view of the church was constructed the great institution that dominated the West in the Middle Ages. That is the story of the working out of these ideas in practice which shows the genius of the Western view of the church. If the Eastern church tended to be mystical the Western church tended to be practical, activist, and pragmatic. As Congar summarizes, "This was a church much more effectively marked by the system of militant action and the human expression of the spiritual-celestial authority . . ."¹²

While a final pronouncement on the Roman Catholic dogma of the church is yet to be made, the practical outworking of this hierarchial view has long since been in operation. The church is microcosmically present in the Pope, the head of the church on earth. Through him spiritual authority is passed to the lesser orders which are in proper succession. In him the purity of faith is assured, the validity of the sacraments guaranteed, and the Christian legal system established. Vatican I (1870) placed the capstone on the system in its declaration of Papal Infallibility, a device for both securing and manipulating tradition. As explicated in the Council of Trent (1545-1563) the church has instituted rites of aid to man's salvation. She reserves the right to interpret Scripture and to determine accepted versions. She is the one church declaring and assuring the validity of the sacraments; their power is vested in the church. Thus, the church is the only agent of salvation.

The hierarchical view of the church leads to a very efficient organization and institution. It maintains organic unity allowing for a measure of diversity but defining the boundaries of divergence to be tolerated. In this view the power of the church rests in the hands of the few; the many are often little more than passive spectators accepting the assurance of salvation promised by ecclesiastical leaders. Purity and effectiveness in such a view depends upon the quality and ability of the leadership.

THE LUTHERAN VIEW: A DUALISTIC VIEW

Sometimes positions are more easily described than named; this is true of Luther's view of the church.¹³ The term

"Dualistic View" is adopted to suggest Luther's view of the church as internal and outward, as hidden and seen, as a spiritual fellowship and an organized association, as above the world and part of the world, as saved and sinner. Luther's dualism arose out of a dilemma: he wanted both a believer's church based on personal faith and experience and a territorial church which included all in a given locality.¹⁴ In trying to preserve something of both he settled for a compromise.

As did much of Luther's thought, his view of the church began with his emphasis upon justification by faith. As an Augustinian, however, Luther believed that faith is a gift of God based upon election. The church, therefore, cannot be all inclusive. He insisted that the church is made up of those who live in true faith, hope and love; ". . . the essence, life and nature of the church is not a bodily assembly, but an assembly of hearts in one faith, . . ." ¹⁵ Moreover, Luther saw that the church is one, not because of any relation to a center like Rome, but because ". . . each one preaches, believes, hopes, loves, and lives like the other." ¹⁶ A spiritual unity makes a church. Further, Luther's view of the sacraments brought him to the belief that only convinced believers in true relationship with God and fellowship with the church should share in the Lord's supper, for only where faith is present are the sacraments efficacious.

Such views imply both a spiritualistic approach to the church and a high degree of individualism. Realizing dangers in these tendencies Luther emphasized ideas which modified the positions and held them in tension with balancing views. He was forced to this from two directions: the necessity of establishing an evangelical church order over against the Catholics and the urgency of setting forth a defense against the theories of the Anabaptists of the type of Muntzer.¹⁷ In providing these answers he moved in the direction of a territorial church.

In the matter of establishing an evangelical church order Luther had to consider a form to be assumed by the external church that it might be an appropriate agency for the production of the communion of saints. Here Luther insisted that only the Word and the sacraments are necessary for the existence of the church; the hierarchy and the Roman See are not essential. The role of the Word and the sacraments was not to be minimized in any way, however. To him these were the marks which made the "bodily external Christendom (Christenheit)" evident. To

this outer church belong leaders and laity whether truly Christian or not. "The external marks, whereby one can perceive where this church is on earth, are baptism, the Sacrament (Lord' Supper), and the Gospel."¹⁸ These were more than ornaments of the church; indeed, they were seen as effective in bringing people to God. He wrote, "Where baptism and the gospel are, there let no one doubt that there are also saints, even though it should be only children in their cradles." The outward bodily church and the inner spiritual church are to be carefully discriminated, but not separated. They are related to one another as body and soul in man.¹⁹

Luther's view of the church worked out in a kind of dualism in many areas of theology and experience. In anthropology he saw justified man as yet sinner. The man of Romans, chapter seven, was for Luther the justified man struggling—not very successfully—against sin in the flesh. Following through on this view into society-at-large Luther saw the need for the authority and power of the state to keep men in line—even in a Christian state. He saw little prospect of the coming of a Christian society. A man was a citizen of two communities, the church and the state. Each had its function. It was good to have Christian princes governing the state, but the state was hereby not more Christian, even though in such a state the church could play its role more fully.

Luther's dualism tended toward polarization in many areas of theology and practice rather than balance and tension. In seeking to retain opposites rather than finding a synthesis or a balance, a potentially unstable situation obtains. History showed that people tend either to bog down into an unconcerned indifference in the face of apparently irreconcilable tenets; or, having a vital concern in the life and thinking of the church, they tend to move toward one pole or the other creating divisions.

THE CALVINISTIC VIEW: A THEOCRATIC VIEW

While the term "Theocratic" generally has application to a dominant role of a church or a priestly class in the state, for want of a better, this term is applied here to Calvin's view of the church. This is justified in the light of Calvin's emphasis upon divine sovereignty and his view of the application of that sovereignty within every aspect of the church and extending

beyond into society. Calvin's idea of the church was seasoned by a dream of the Holy Commonwealth in the terrestrial sphere.

John Calvin, who was among the latest of the great Reformation writers, borrowed freely from earlier reformers in developing his view of the church.²⁰ His view of the Lord's Supper as a channel of spiritual communion was similar to that of Luther. The concept of the Holy Commonwealth along with that of limited use of external aids in worship showed affinities to Zwingli. The idea of the church as a community of convinced believers and the demand for rigorous discipline suggested Anabaptist influence. However, Calvin adapted these elements to his own thinking and in light of the idea of divine sovereignty developed them into a view of the church that was his own.

For Calvin, influenced by Augustine, the church was constituted of all the elect—the dead, the living, and the unborn,²¹ though it is not clear to man in every case who is a true member of the church. "Church" as used in the Scriptures frequently designated the whole multitude dispersed over all the world, professing faith in Jesus Christ, initiated into his faith by baptism, testifying to their unity in doctrine and communion, and consenting to the Word. Many *in* the church, however, are not *of* it, for there are here hypocrites of various sorts. This makes necessary a differentiation between the church visible and the church invisible: the tares ever grow along with the wheat.²² Calvin stated, "We ought to acknowledge as members of the church all those who by a confession of faith, an exemplary life, and a participation of the sacraments, profess the same God and Christ with ourselves."²³

The true, invisible church, being based on election, is known but to God. Calvin found the doctrine of election—trust in absolute divine sovereignty in relation to individual salvation—a doctrine of comfort. He was willing to leave such matters to God. It was not man's business to be preoccupied with his salvation, to seek assurance, or to earn his salvation; man's vocation was to honor God.²⁴ Calvin was willing to outline these matters as he saw them in the Scriptures. The outworking he left to God while he turned the greater part of his attention to the structure and activity and expression of the visible church.

According to Calvin the church of God exists "wherever we find the word of God purely preached and heard and the

sacraments administered according to the institution of Christ.”²⁵ It is necessary for persons to be related to the church, for God considers “every one as a traitor and apostate from religion, who perversely withdraws himself from any Christian society which preserves the true ministry of the word and sacraments. . . . Separation from the church is the denial of God and Christ.”²⁶ With the church is vested the power of the keys, the power of granting forgiveness and the ministry of reconciliation,²⁷ a power associated with the preaching of the Gospel.²⁸ For these reasons Calvin was concerned that the entire community be involved in the church and that the church be involved in the entire community.

Calvin was explicit that the state should be distinct from the church. Only the state had power to wield the sword and to administer physical punishment against evil doers—even if they were a part of the church. However, within the church itself there must be discipline. Believers should be admonished regarding their errors; those who led scandalous lives should be removed from the church. The wicked should be separated from the righteous that they may not be an evil influence and that the erring may be led to repentance.²⁹ Such correction should not be administered by one person, but by a lawful assembly.³⁰

In actual practice, first in Geneva, and later in Scotland and New England, the Reformed Church shaped after Calvin’s thought became an agency which enforced the will of the church on the whole community. In these Calvinistic centers where the church was able to dominate the situation, life and morality were prescribed by the church. To have significant voice in the community one must be a part of the church, subscribing to its principles and practices. The structure of the church with the eldership serving as a kind of spy system to root out evil and divergency assured an oligarchy of the elect. The magistrates became the servants of the church to provide and enforce laws which would secure spiritual and material prosperity and to punish every uprising against the recognized religion.³¹ The consistory, under the guidance of the clergy, elders, and deacons, became the voice of God to the community guiding its affairs, establishing a theocracy in fact. Such a Holy Commonwealth could be realized only as there was high selectivity of membership. Disidents had to line up or leave.

A theocratic view of the church carries advantages for

the church in its handling of competition. The church directly or indirectly controls manners and morals through discipline in the church, legislation in society-at-large, and elimination of the opposition in general. It makes for a rigorous and demanding church, both in itself and in the community—at least in the first stages of the theocracy and for as long as the vision persists with clarity. The church is all-encompassing; all facets of life come under its domination. Church and community are essentially one.

Problems arise from this view in that religion is practically forced upon people. While ideally all are church members voluntarily, in fact, many are members and participate in the church under pressure and for expediency. In succeeding generations problems become particularly apparent as those born into the families of the godly fail to share in the vision of their parents. More than some others this approach contributes to hypocrisy within the church because there is so much to be gained in maintaining an appearance of godliness.

REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

From the views of the church surveyed in this study several statements may be offered as reflections suggesting conclusions:

1. Theology is fundamental to ecclesiology. The way in which a group understands God and his ways with men will have considerable bearing upon the view of the church which it develops. Any religious body must keep its theology in view as it attempts to clarify its ecclesiology.

2. Ecclesiology determines polity within a religious body; indeed, polity is the means for interpreting and applying the view of the church.

3. Out of ecclesiology flows the "style of life" and the general direction of religious thought and expression of the members of a religious body. A shift in ecclesiology will precede shifts in the "style of life" and the general direction of expression of the members of a group and vice versa.

In conclusion, it may be said that a clear understanding and explication of the doctrine of the church is crucial to a logical

development and an effective expression of any religious body. A grasp of the nature of the church by its members is a key to any intelligent witness to the world.

¹ Athanasius, *Of the Incarnation*, in Johannes Quasten, *Patrology* (Westminster, Md.: The Newman Press, 1963), Vol. III, p. 71.

² M. J. Congar, *Chrétiens Désunis, Principes d'un "OEcumenisme" Catholique*, tr. by the present writer (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1937), p. 14.

³ John Oman, "The Church," James Hastings, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* (N. Y.: Scribners, 1911), III, p. 622.

⁴ Yves Congar, *After Nine Hundred Years* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1959), p. 51.

⁵ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, III, 24, 1.

⁶ *Ibid.*, III, 3, 2.

⁷ Cyprian, *The Unity of the Church*.

⁸ ——— *Epistle LXVIII*, 8.

⁹ ——— *The Unity of the Church and various Epistles, e.g.*, LIX, 5; LX, 5; LXIX, 1.

¹⁰ J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (New York: Harper and Brothers 1960), pp. 412-417.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 417.

¹² Congar, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

¹³ It should be stated that this study seeks to present some of Luther's views of the church rather than elaborate those developed in the Lutheran movement. The same applies in the case of Calvin and the Reformed movement.

¹⁴ Roland Baintan, *Here I Stand* (New York, Mentor Books, 1950), p. 243.

¹⁵ Martin Luther, "The Papacy at Rome," *Works of Martin Luther*, Philadelphia Edition, 6 vols. (Philadelphia: Muhlenburg Press, 1943), I, p. 349.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Reinhold Seeburg, *Textbook of the History of Doctrines* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1964), II, p. 292.

¹⁸ Luther, *op. cit.*, p. 361

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Roland Bainton, *The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century* (Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, paperback ed., 13th printing, 1965), p. 110.

²¹ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, IV, i, 7.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*, IV, i, 8.


²⁴ *Ibid.*, III, xxi, 1-7.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, IV, i, 9.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, IV, i, 10.

- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, IV, i, 22.
²⁸ *Ibid.*, IV, xi, 1.
²⁹ *Ibid.*, IV, xii, 6.
³⁰ *Ibid.*, IV, xi, 5.
³¹ Seeberg, *op. cit.*, p. 411.





ASHLAND THEOLOGICAL BULLETIN

Ashland Theological Seminary

Ashland, Ohio

Spring 1970

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ASHLAND THEOLOGICAL BULLETIN

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Introduction to the Current Issue

THE PRESENT issue of the *Ashland Theological Bulletin* is built upon the idea of Biblical centrality which is a basic concern of Ashland Theological Seminary. The approach to the subject, in this issue, is practical rather than theoretical; that is, the writers take their inspiration and basis from the Scriptures and develop their ideas accordingly. They are working with the Bible rather than writing about it.

Dr. Stark wrestles with the crucial issue of the role and significance of the Bible in seminary studies, presenting the view that the Scriptures must be the hub around which any adequate curriculum can be built. The *Bulletin* invites response from educators and clergy to the ideas presented by this statement.

In the second article the writer examines the Babel narrative from the Old Testament and applies the insights of the science of linguistics to his exposition with interesting insights for the origin of languages. The next article examines a New Testament passage exegetically and gives light on a difficult saying of Jesus.

The final article, "Christian Comprehensiveness," is an example of Biblical preaching from the Epistle to the Hebrews as presented in the seminary chapel by Dr. Heisey, Associate Professor of Speech and Homiletics.

A news note describing the Baxter Collection of library works from Scotland is included. Miss Agnes Ballantyne, Library Cataloguer, Retired, writes of the distinguished scholar, James Houston Baxter and his notable private library, a part of which has come to the A. T. S. Library.

Owen H. Alderfer, editor

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Biblical Studies and The Seminary Curriculum

BRUCE C. STARK

THE PLACE of Biblical studies in the seminary curriculum is one of the most difficult and controverted aspects of theological experience today. A major reason for this is a shifting away from traditional concepts of revelation, authority and inspiration, but even in conservative schools the problem persists.¹ The landslide of changes in curricula connote a certain uneasiness in high places. These changes go far beyond a mere interest in being contemporary, and may betray fundamental uncertainties in the minds of theological educators. The problem worsens in the face of withering criticism and persistent charges of "irrelevance" leveled against the theological institutions. What appears to be needed is a Christian philosophy of theological education that is firm enough not to be cast about by every wind of change, and yet flexible enough to take sensitive account of the deep concerns of contemporary men.

One's concept of the role of Biblical studies is relative to the educational philosophy he holds, and this in turn is embraced in principle in a world and life view. In our context of thinking, Christian theology provides the framework, motivation, and perspective for the educational process. A defective theology invalidates any educational philosophy built upon it, and this inadequacy may well erupt in confusion, backtracking, vacillation, or fragmentation of the theological curriculum. Need it be added that a truly Christian theology must be Biblically informed? We turn then to that aspect of Christian theology that pertains to the Bible itself.

I

BIBLICAL PRIMACY AN INFERENCE FROM A PROPER VIEW OF REVELATION, AUTHORITY, AND INSPIRATION

The Bible is an utterly unique book in that it is the embodiment of a divine message revealed to the prophets and apostles of old. While the means used to communicate the message were various, and while a wide spectrum of human personalities is utilized, the message is not human in its source but divine. The possibility of such a communication is vindicated in

the light of man's image relationship to God (Gen. 1:26, 27). The necessity of it is enforced by human depravity, and the actuality of it in Scripture is a witness to the grace and power of God. There is, to be sure, an epochal character to this revelation, so that the O. T. came bit by bit and in various ways, culminating in Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1, 2). The O. T. revelation is not less divine than the N. T. The unity between the Testaments is fundamental in the manner of promise and fulfillment. The O. T. epoch was not a ghostly cast of bloodless specters whose shadowy forms acted out a spooky charade of things to come, but, rather, a solid revelation of the grace and power of a holy God. Francisco has well said, "If the Old Testament is only the New Testament in hieroglyphics, it is much more simple for one to read the New Testament."² God did, in fact, speak unto the fathers in the prophets, and to this sublime fact the N. T. itself bears eloquent witness. Attempts to truncate revelation by driving a wedge between the Old and the New, or, more radically, to limit revelation to human experience itself without welding it inseparably to an inerrant Bible, are causes of grave concern and must be met squarely and unflinchingly. The Holy Spirit speaking in and through the Scriptures is well able to meet the spiritual needs of men everywhere, revealing the guilty and disordered state of their own hearts and the complete sufficiency of Christ's redeeming work. The practicality and effectiveness of the Word testifies to its divine origin and thus corroborates its own claim.

Divine authority (the right to command), is implicit in the revelational character of the Scripture.³ Ultimate authority is in God and when God speaks the world must listen or pay the consequences. The authority of the Bible is intrinsic to the message itself, and being God's Word its authority is totally unconditioned. When the message of the Bible is correctly apprehended it is uncompromising and unyielding. While divine administrations may change according to the wisdom of him who works all things after the counsel of his own will, the truth of God is as deathless as God himself. While it is always important that men apprehend the message in a vital and personal way, human appropriation can in no proper sense be said to establish Biblical authority. Human religious experience must be authentic experience but Scripturally interpreted. Moreover, even the most fervid experience is susceptible to misunderstanding and it is not uncommon that its very intensity tends to increase the probability

that it will.⁴ The Scripture is a "home" for the anchor of faith, and Christian experience is tied to it.

While the concept of inspiration is still muddled in the minds of many in spite of the avalanche of literature dealing with it, it is necessary to point out that in terms of the interpretation of the Greek word *theopneustos* (inspired) in II Tim. 3:16, this must be taken to refer specifically to the text of the O. T., and, by implication, applied to the whole Bible. It is the recorded words of God that are "inspired", i. e., God-breathed. Insofar as the human authors are concerned, the divine enablement and guidance that they experienced are very real (II Peter 1:21), but in the interests of theological precision they should be described by different terms. Being a faithful record of God's message, the Bible embodies a quality shared by no other book, and breathes a spirit known to no other literature.⁵ All of these theological points need to be kept in mind as the bases upon which the subsequent ideas are built. Affirming these things to be true, let us relate them to the question of the seminary curriculum.

II

BIBLICAL PRIMACY HINDERED BY A FAULTY CONCEPT OF DEPARTMENTS

It has been generally assumed, probably too hastily, that departmental structure in some traditional sense is essential to the task. There is, however, a grave danger in parcelling out the materials of theological education in this manner. While it is true that special subject areas must be taken into serious account, departmental zeal has been known to reveal itself in whirlpools of self-interest, which are physically related but functionally isolated. While a certain camaraderie may develop in such a ghetto, the total effect is not helpful. The tendency is to drift into a pathological self-identity at the expense of the seminary as a whole. Harmonious and effective departmental relationships can be built upon mutual respect for the dignity and significance of *all* phases of the academic program. Close proximity of subject areas is no guarantee of automatic solidarity.

Yet it is erroneous to assume that every department is of equal importance and the attempt to defend this doubtful thesis is an implicit disrespect to the Word of God, though not necessarily intentional. It would appear necessary to insist that there is some central point of focus in the curriculum to which everything else related and in which they inhere, something after the

pattern of a mosaic with a central piece and a supporting pattern. We are contending that Biblical studies constitute this point of reference.

Since the subject of our inquiry is the role of Biblical studies, we must indicate the sense in which the term is being employed. It can be taken quite properly in the wider sense to include background and methodological studies. Courses on Bible Introduction, Greek, Hebrew, Hermeneutics, etc. would fall in this grouping. More precisely, however, we shall take the expression to refer to applied studies related to the form and content of the Bible, especially as these come to focus in Biblical Theology. Adopting the narrower view implies no disparagement of the methodological courses, for without the proper keys we could not unlock the spiritual treasures of the Bible. The distinction we are making is the ancient one between method and practice.

III

BIBLICAL PRIMACY REFLECTED IN INTERDEPARTMENTAL RELATIONS

The centrality of Biblical studies in the curriculum may be reinforced and spelled out somewhat by considering more precisely what the lines of connection are. We are not implying that other subject areas do not sustain a connection to each other, but we do wish to underscore the foundational and structural significance of the Biblical.

A. BIBLICAL STUDIES AND PRACTICES

Practical theology generally is understood to include, however the terminology may vary, Christian Education, Pastoral Ministries, Liturgics, and Christian Missions. Practices gets its inspiration and direction from the Bible. The relation of the Bible to preaching and counselling is fundamental. Whether the preaching is the "sincere milk of the word," or "strong meat," it should be Biblical in content. Many a congregation is dying a death of spiritual malnutrition. Counselling that professes even the remotest connection to Christian faith has long recognized the therapeutic value of the Bible. Guidelines for personal decisions and encouragement from the toilsome way are found here. Psychological techniques, where valid, should be used, *but they must be interpreted in a Christian manner.*

Christian education too must understand its task in terms of Biblical revelation. The tendency to drift into a religious prag-

matism where mere "effectiveness" in some Philistine sense of the word is considered primary, bears more likeness to the image of John Dewey than to Jesus Christ. Biblical relatedness bears no arms against progressive and forward-looking attitudes; quite otherwise as a matter of fact, for only as educators recognize this connection are they in a position to plan and evaluate creatively and honorably within the kingdom of God.

The Christian task in world missions must be Biblically justified and guided. No Christian outreach can afford the doubtful luxury of a nebulous Biblical theology. The fundamental theological concepts of God, man, sin and redemption, that are exegetically valid, need to be securely in hand. Also, the relation of the missionary to his task, his mission board, and to his church, must be understood in terms that are Biblically defensible. All of this is not necessarily a plea for a "chapter and verse" mentality, for Biblical validity goes beyond explicit textual reference to embrace the clear implications of the Spirit's directives or any logical extension of Biblical principles.

B. BIBLICAL STUDIES AND HISTORY

Sacred history both antedates and postdates the text of the Bible, but as soon as we attempt to define in some way what we mean by "history" we are thrown back upon the insights provided by the Bible. Irrespective of what aspect of redemptive experience we may choose to concern ourselves with, it is evident that Biblical materials must be either presupposed or specifically handled. The theological concepts of creation, providence and consummation are the girders around which the stuff of history is built. The whole idea of history as directional and teleological is a Scriptural one, and delivers us from the bleak despair and chilling influence of philosophies of history that attempt to interpret the course of the centuries from the inside out. History is the creation of God and should be approached in this light.⁶

C. BIBLICAL STUDIES AND SYSTEMATICS

The organization of Scriptural teachings into some theological pattern may be designated systematic theology. The stress falls upon logical connections and exegetical justification. It must be stated emphatically that no adequate Christian systematics is possible except as the fruit of mature, painstaking and scrupulous attention to the Bible text. Nothing can dissipate the musty smell of the ivory tower—too often a concomitant of the great systems of the past—like a breath of fresh air from the Word of God. The truth of the Scriptures must be ever expressed

in contemporary language and thought patterns, reflecting to some degree the idiom of the day. This attempt to give an up-to-date expression to the teachings of the Bible is highly commendable *per se*, but it is not to be applauded if it tries to substitute modern forms for spiritual depth. We have had quite enough of the light-hearted exegesis that cringes at the sight of a Greek verb or Hebrew clause. The theologian's first responsibility is to deal with the inscripturated Word *in situ*. Biblical validity is the authority of any theological system.

IV

BIBLICAL PRIMACY REFLECTED IN CURRICULAR STRUCTURE

The seminary curriculum is a tree, having parallels discernable to root, trunk and branches. This pattern clarifies the logical relations of the courses and indicates in a general way the chronological order in which a student might encounter them. Practical or psychological considerations, in a specific individual's case, may at times require some other sequence of course experience, but there is a natural order and this should not be disregarded without solid reasons.

A. THE ROOTS

Two areas should be designated as roots: (1) Undergraduate Background; and (2) Theological Method.

Most seminaries have a tough-looking list of entrance requirements, but these not infrequently look more awesome than they really are, and can be bullied somewhat by a determined challenge from an academically under-equipped student. Too elastic a policy here, however, practical considerations to the contrary notwithstanding, is not without its negative effect. When classes come to be composed of academic "have's" and "have not's," there is a virtual guarantee of mediocre achievement. Seminary learning has its social and competitive aspects. Where the challenge of friendly competition is impossible through gross inequities in background or natural ability, a very useful educational tool is blunted. Perhaps the most dependable and honorable way of guaranteeing that minimal entrance requirements are met, is a series of well-designed tests intended to reveal (irrespective of undergraduate course work reported) exactly what the level of background of a given student is. The mechanics of this would have to be carefully considered according to the specific situation. Mature college experiences in English, history, science, philosophy, psychology, etc., are vital,

and deficiencies in these areas should be dealt with before theological study proper begins.

B. THE TRUNK

Biblical studies constitute the trunk of the tree, and in approaching Biblio-theological materials the historical principle seems both valid and fruitful. Full account must be taken of all the phenomena presented by the text, and the theological concepts may then be discussed in terms of progressive unfolding. The term generally used to describe this approach is Biblical Theology, and although the name is subject to considerable misunderstanding, it seems best to retain it and try to make certain that the idea of development through progressive revelation comes through.⁷ This idea is readily applicable to O. T. studies where the historical expanse involved is considerable. The expression Biblical Theology takes on a slightly different cast when applied to the N. T., for here the whole process of divine revelation is confined to a period of fifty years or less. The N. T. theologies are therefore customarily organized in terms of Synoptic theology, Johannine theology, Petrine theology, etc., and there seems no substantial reason to quarrel with this organization. In adopting the historical principle in Biblical studies we garner several advantages:

1. Setting the study of the Bible and its theology within the womb of history will tend to create a wholesome appreciation of the past.

2. The historical method does most justice to the way in which God has, as a matter of fact, revealed Himself.

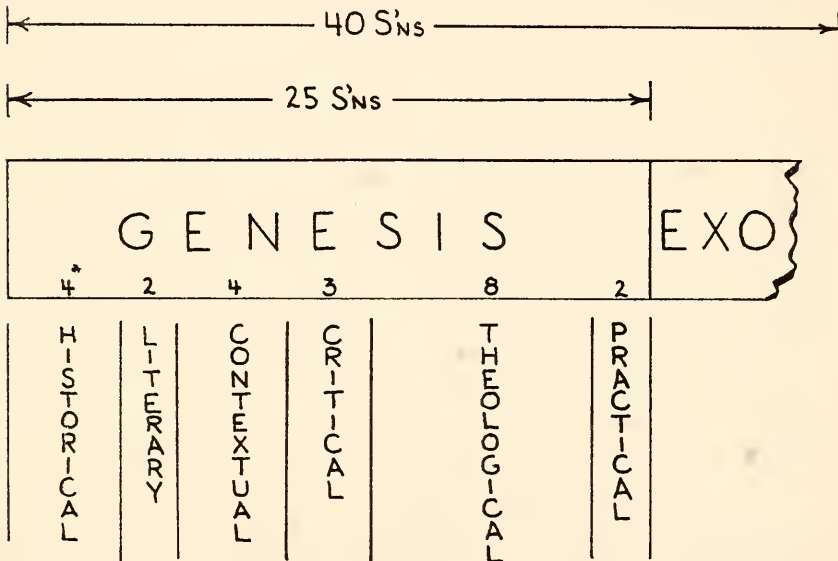
3. The historical principle in Biblio-theological study tends to convey a deep sense of the wholeness and continuity of life.

4. The historical method is the most contemporary method. Though frequently abused by naturalistic presuppositions and perspectives, it is widely employed to good advantage. In fact, the revival of Biblical theology as an historical discipline could very well be one of the most important theological developments of modern times.

It is of maximal importance that Biblical studies not be thinned out by a variety of practical expediencies. A high achievement level is not an ethereal ideal but a grim and down-to-earth essential, as all those who are involved will discover when they come to give account of their stewardship. It would seem that the Christian churches have a right to expect their

ministers to be men of professional attainment, men broadly cultivated in all areas, but above all, men who are thoroughly versed in the Bible.

Assuming the historical principle, we may illustrate how this works out in a classroom situation. Starting with a hypothetical course which we shall call O. T. I, designed to cover the books of Genesis and Exodus, it might be worked out as follows:



* Number of sessions allotted to each category is suggestive only.

Appropriate members of the faculty (regular or special), would be called in as resource persons for a specified number of sessions. Each would be free to handle the materials in his own area of responsibility with as much imagination and creativity as possible, but would be conscious that his particular contribution must be intergrated as a part of the whole corpus of material. One professor would be in charge of the course and could help in synthesizing the various contributions. Some definite agreement would have to obtain as to what is included in the various areas of Literary, Historical, Contextual, Critical, Theological and Practical. Listed below is a suggested breakdown of responsibility.

I. *Historical*

- A. Historical background of the books, political, cultural, etc.
- B. Geography
- C. Historicity of persons and events in the book

- D. Chronology of the period
- E. Archaeological data bearing on general background

II. *Critical*

- A. Title
- B. Authorship and Date (exclusive of personality study of author)
- C. Language(s) employed in writing the book
- D. Provenance (source and occasion)
- E. Composition
- F. Canonicity

III. *Literary*

A. *Form*

1. Linguistic and syntactical analysis of text or portions thereof
2. Literary form of the book as a whole (Novel, Drama, Epistle, History, etc.)
3. Literary forms of sections of the book (Poem, Parable, Proverb, Memoirs, Genealogy, etc.)
4. Figures of Speech
5. Symbols
6. Structure
 - a. Intrinsic structure
 - b. Extrinsic structure
7. History of the text since canonization recognized
8. Special features or peculiarities

B. *Content*

1. Over-view of the whole book
2. Substance of particular passages

C. *Context*

1. Parallels of form or content in the same book
2. Parallels of form or content in other Bible books
3. Extra-biblical parallels

IV. *Theological* (Actually a part of Content, treated separately for fuller discussion)

- A. Means of Revelation used
- B. The Subjective Reception of Revelation
- C. Purpose of the book and how it is expressed
- D. Major theological concepts
- E. Progress of theological ideas

V. *Practical*

- A. Devotional Significance of the Book (Prayer, etc.)
- B. Sermonic use
- C. Liturgical use
- D. Missionary thrust
- E. Christian educational use

VI. *Literature*

- A. Periodical
- B. Other

Approaching Biblical materials in this way assures involvement from a wide spectrum of faculty members, thus encouraging the idea that there is something fundamental about the place of Biblical studies in the curriculum. It also makes possible a more effective relating of non-Biblical materials to the Biblical studies by having some people directly involved whose major responsibilities lie in another area. Rigid departmentalization is thus discouraged if not rendered impossible. All this is gain.

C. THE BRANCHES

After Biblical materials have been dealt with, the student would normally expect to move into the area of practical theology. There is a sense in which the thrust of the entire seminary program comes to focus here. Practices, as previously noted, is not exempt from the discipline of Biblio-theological perspective, but must interpret its tasks in accord with it. While a comparatively greater degree of flexibility and sensitivity to new ways and means should be reflected here, novelty should be discouraged. Mere innovation achieves nothing, except perhaps to contribute to the educator's own self-deception of progress. Changes are not intrinsically good or bad, but must be evaluated from the point of view dictated by theological stance as related to the current human situation.

Concurrent to his broad experience in practical theology, the senior student will also launch into a field of major interest. This might be any one of the four major departmental areas or an aspect of one. Hopefully, the student closes out his seminary training with direct involvement in the practical concerns of Christian ministering, whether on or off campus, and in exploring a major special interest area of his own. A thesis requirement would relate to the latter.



CONCLUSION

Throughout this essay we have sought to establish the central significance of Biblical studies in the seminary curriculum. The curricular concerns of the seminary are tied up with a Christian theology and the specific theological frame of reference of the institution. Departments in the usual and formal sense can

be detrimental if the "links in a chain" concept is taken to imply departmental equality or separation. Biblical studies relate to all departments so as to constitute a central focal point in a mosaic pattern. Success within the Biblio-theological area requires adequate background and skills on the part of participating students, who will be engaged in applying the historical principle to the books of the Bible. The total thrust of Biblical study so construed is directed concurrently into practical theology and a specialized major field interest.

¹ Kenneth Kantzer, "The Authority of the Bible," in Merrill C. Tenney, ed., *The Word for This Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 26.

² Clyde T. Francisco, *Introducing the Old Testament* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1950), p. 1.

³ Bernard Ramm, *The Pattern of Religious Authority* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1957). Ramm's definition of authority is found on p. 10, but his whole discussion is extremely helpful. See pp. 38-40 especially.

⁴ For two bizarre examples of religious fanaticism see Warren C. Young, *A Christian Approach to Philosophy* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1963 printing) p. 222, footnote 10. Young refers to two articles that appeared in the *Chicago Tribune* under the dates of Sept. 4, 1949; and Sept. 18, 1949.

⁵ A most remarkable digest of the wealth of English literature on the subject of inspiration in the last one-hundred years is found in H. D. McDonald, *Theories of Revelation* (London: George Allen & Unwin LTD, 1963).

⁶ Earle E. Cairns, "Christian Faith and History," in Hudson T. Armerding, ed., *Christianity and the World of Thought* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1968) p. 160.

⁷ See objections to the term in Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology*, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1959) p. 23.

The Origin of Languages

JERRY A. GRIEVE

At that time the speech and vocabulary of all the inhabitants of the earth were one and the same. When they were making their journey eastward they found a plain in the land of Shinar, whereupon they proceeded immediately to inhabit it. Soon men were making strong appeals to one another: "Let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly." (So it was that they had brick to use for stone, and for the mortar they used bitumen.) "Come on," they said, "let us build a city and a tower whose top extend to the very heavens. Let us thereby make a reputation for ourselves to prevent our being scattered throughout the earth." Later, the Lord proceeded to come down in order to investigate the city and the tower which the human race had built. "Look there," the Lord said. "All the people are one and their speech is one; hence this is what they have begun to do. And now nothing will prevent them from carrying out whatever they continually plan to do. Come then, let us go down there and so confuse their language that they may not understand one another's speech." Therefore, the Lord proceeded to scatter them from that place throughout the earth, and so they stopped building the city. Consequently, it was given the name "Babel" because there the Lord confused the speech of all the people, and from there He scattered them throughout the earth. (Personal translation of Gen. 11:1-9)

THE OLD problems of reconciling what appear to be contradictions between what the Bible says and what science says has frustrated many scholarly inquiries into the truth of matters. Note that these are *apparent* contradictions; there can be no contradictions between what the Bible in fact declares to be true and reality. The particular difficulty usually lies either in the exegesis of Scripture or in the accuracy of the conflicting scientific pronouncements. It would appear that the conflict in Genesis 11:1-9 concerning the diversity of the world's languages is an example of the former. That Hebrew was the original language and that God created the diverse languages of the world by the confusion of tongues, remained practically unquestioned until the 19th century.¹ However, the Bible makes no claim

about the identity of the original language—much less that Hebrew was that language. And if we have misunderstood what the real miracle is in the above passage, then the following remarks on a very familiar subject may be justified. Briefly stated, it is the purpose of this paper to give an interpretation of the “tower of Babel” which is at once faithful to the inspired record and compatible with modern linguistic science.

There are many ponderous issues that could receive attention in this passage. For brevity's sake we will focus only on what is germane to our purpose. The focal issue which we wish to elaborate is whether the event here recorded concerns the diversity of language, or whether it concerns the dispersion of people. The plan of attack is first to set forth the guidelines furnished by the inspired record, and then to expand and add what information we can with the help of linguistics.

A BIBLICAL POINT OF VIEW

By taking Babel as a kind of historical focal point, the Bible clearly indicates that before Babel the human race was united, but that after Babel it became divided. This so-called unity is to be seen, first of all, in the use of the adjective “one” for modifying three different nouns: “speech” (*saphah*), “words” (*debharim*), and “people” (*'am*).² The inspired writer then informs us that the people sought a more substantial unity by building a city and a tower. The underlying motive for doing this is negatively cast in the expression, “. . . lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.” (All quotations from the Bible are from the RSV.) Such a motive was in direct violation of the will of God expressed to Noah and his family after the flood: “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.”³ Through unbelief the people desired some means which would keep them together and thus hopefully promise security and eminence to ward off their unmitigated fears. The Lord interprets their action as being a logical outgrowth of the unanimity of sin: “Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; and nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them.”

That His command to populate the whole earth may be obeyed, and that man may no longer dissipate himself upon such foolish undertakings, the Lord decreed an end to their vain unity: “Come, let us go down, and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.” Such is

the stated purpose, but note how it is executed: "So the Lord scattered them abroad. . . ." To bring about diversity of language the Lord first caused a dispersion. The real miracle in the tower of Babel, then, is not the confusion of tongues but the scattering of the people. Three points bring support to this exegesis: (1) A syntactic identification of the verbal *wayyaphets* reveals that it is a waw consecutive signifying logical result. Thus the action which commences in verse 8 proceeds directly, in a logical way, from verse 7. The English words "so" or "therefore" translate this feature of the Hebrew verb quite adequately. (Also, the perfects *balal* and *hephitsam* in verses 9 are not temporally ordered so as to suggest that the confusion transpired before the scattering. Rather, they are correlative ideas associated with the naming of "Babel".) (2) Other references to this phenomenon mention only that the earth was divided (Gen. 10:5, 25, 32). This would seem to indicate that great migrations of people is the central idea expanded upon in 11:1-9. (3) Discoveries made by linguistic science prove conclusively that different languages do develop from a single language community when groups split off by emigrating to new territory. The number of languages depends on the number of migrations both from the parent language and from the various daughter languages that evolved from it. Elaboration of this last point appears below.

The exegesis being supported in this paper is that "the earth was divided," and as a consequence the one language became many. (If someone is bothered by the possibility that the inspired writer may have seen both these aspects as occurring undivided by time, he has only to look elsewhere for similar occurrences.⁴)

A LINGUISTIC POINT OF VIEW

Language can be viewed as a static system or as a living organism. That is to say, we can study language from a synchronic approach or a diachronic approach (or both, if we are interested in giving a complete description). This dual aspect of language can better be seen in an illustration made famous by the notable French linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure. By taking the stem of a plant and making two cuts, one horizontally and the other vertically, one exposes two different views to the stem. The cross-section reveals a configuration of circles quite unlike the strands and fibers of the section cut lengthwise. Each is analogous to a branch of linguistics. Synchronic linguistics gives

a static view of language—of the phonological, syntactic and semantic structures—in a way similar to the cross-section of the stem.

The other approach to language, diachronic linguistics, gives an historical view—the phonological, syntactic, and semantic, changes—of the “growth” of the language. When a grammar is made of a language, it is like taking a snapshot of its linguistic structure, freezing it at one period of its development. But since a grammar itself undergoes no change it soon fails to reflect all the significant patterns that characterize the same language at a later period. This is why new grammars must be written, or else the old ones constantly revised.

It is in studies of diachrony that we are able to see just how radical the changes are that affect the structure of language. Compare 9th century Old English with Modern English; the two look almost like two different languages. Diachronic studies also tell us that the changes one language undergoes are independent of the changes in another language. Such independence holds true when there is a division of a speech community, as when a group emigrates from the main body. From then on the changes in each group continue independently of each other. In time the changes result in the emergence of a new language. Such an account as this is what is precisely given with regard to the development of English from West Germanic.⁵ Moreover, it is well known to linguists that the main branches of Indo-European development as groups successively broke away in migrations from the primitive Indo-European community.⁶

A third branch of linguistics is that called comparative linguistics. As the name implies this approach to language has to do with the comparison of forms between languages. Although comparative linguistics has many concerns, our main interest here is with language classification. There are two kinds of classification that linguists generally distinguish. One is *typological* classification which groups languages on the basis of such typological features as affixing, isolating, agglutinative, etc. The other classification is based on *genetic relationship*. Two languages which are genetically related can ultimately be traced back to one parent language. The classificatory name given to a set of related languages reflects their genetic relationship.

By comparing cognates shared by the related languages the linguist attempts to explain the patterned sound changes as being derived from a reconstructed primitive state of the parent

language. This reconstructed form of the language is indicated by the prefix *proto-* as in Proto-Germanic.⁷ Figure 1 shows the early development of "guest" from Proto-Germanic.⁸

The comparative method for establishing genetic relationship assumes a variety of factors that may have led to the development of daughter languages from a single language. Cleavages such as migration or splitting of speech areas by invasion of a foreign community, and other factors not yet well understood, are among those assumed.⁹ There are many other aspects of the comparative method which merit our attention but perforce cannot be described here.

Once in a while, a language group which for some time has been thought to be by itself merges with other groups to form an even larger grouping. When the study of African languages really got under way in the 50's such Africanists as Joseph Greenberg noticed the similarity of some Western African languages to the so-called Hamito-Semitic languages. In a new classification Semitic is now considered to be a branch of the Afro-Asiatic family of languages. As research continues more and more self-contained groupings may merge with others to form larger, more encompassing language families.

The difficulty of collapsing language families into larger groupings may be explained by the fact that several milleniums of language development occur before any written records appear. In Indo-European there are several languages known to us only by written records—the languages themselves have long been extinct. The extant writings are nevertheless indispensable for making reconstructions and accounting for the sound changes among the related languages. One of the earliest language attested by records is Egyptian which dates from the 4th millennium B.C.¹⁰ Without a trace of written records one has an almost hopeless task for establishing genetic relationship of languages whose depth of divergence antedates 4000 B.C. by two to six milleniums.

Another explanation for the difficulty of seeing any relationship among the major language families of the world is the lack of reconstructed proto-languages. Any fruitful comparison of Indo-European with Afro-Asiatic, for example, would have to be between their respective proto-languages. However, Indo-European is the only large language family to date that has received sufficient scholarly attention for reconstructing a proto-

language. When we have proto-languages for all the putative families, we may then see relations never before possible.

CONCLUSION

In our thinking such linguistic evidence as we have been considering lends strong support to the interpretation that Genesis 11:1-9 records the original migrations which resulted in the development of the first languages of the world. On the acceptance of this, we would theoretically be able to trace all the world's languages back to one original speech community.

It has been pointed out that there is a marked parallel between *Kulturkreis* (a "culture circle" which is historically connected by sharing a number of cultural traits), migration, and linguistic genetic classification.¹¹ Such a parallel fits Genesis 10 and 11 quite well. The Biblical revelation of "origins" stands to be complemented as intensive research continues in the yet undiscovered mounds of history. This is so because the Bible never suffers at the hand of true science (i.e., "Christian Science" in the sense that Dooyewerd and his followers use it). In fact, true science can be a "demythologizer" of a different sort: it can explode the myth that the book of Genesis contains myth.

¹ In the early 7th century Saint Isidore of Seville wrote in *Etymologies*, "The different languages are a result of the Tower of Babel and before that, there was a single language, Hebrew, both spoken and written by the Prophets and Patriarchs..." Mentioning Hebrew in his English Grammar which appeared in 1634, Charles Butler said it was "the language of our great Grandfather Adam, (which until the confusion all people of the Earth did speak)..." The 19th century linguists, responsible for the great discovery of language during that period, punctured any further belief that Hebrew was the primogenitor of all languages by showing that it was impossible for Indo-European to have sprung from Semitic.

² The Hebrew word *saphah* literally means "lip". Here is synecdochic referring to the employment of the lips in producing speech. The most basic meaning of *dabhar* is "word". Although the two appear to be synonymous, a basic difference in emphasis can be detected. '*ish debharim* (lit. "a man of words") means "an eloquent man" because the emphasis is on the content of speech (Ex. 4:10). By way of contrast '*ish sephathayim* (lit. "a man of lips") means "a mere talker" because the emphasis is on the speech act itself (Job 11:2). The former example might be a case of "language competence" while the latter is a case of "language performance".

The choice of the RSV for "few words" in verse 1 is indeed unfortunate. One wonders if the translators were guided by a popular misconception that primitive languages have limited vocabularies.

³ Genesis 9:1. The Hebrew verb *mil'u* (Kal imperative, 2nd pers. pl.) is a command "to fill" and thus "inhabit" the whole earth.

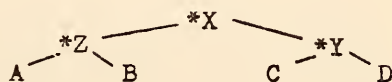
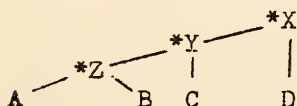
⁴ The classic example is Isaiah 61:1, 2 were both advents of Christ are depicted as being unbroken by time.

⁵ Leonard Bloomfield, *Language* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1933), pp. 312-313.

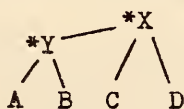
⁶ Cf. Winfred P. Lehmann, *Historical Linguistics: An Introduction* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1962), pp. 28-30: "Around 2000 B.C. Greeks, or Hellenes, began southward invasion and in successive migrations gradually occupied the present area of Greece, the islands and adjoining areas in the Mediterranean, and the West coast of Asia Minor." Somewhat later Italic was brought into the Italian peninsula in a similar way. And the story could be repeated for other branches of the Indo-European family as well.

⁷ Classifying languages, indicating the reconstructed proto-languages and showing all the actual subrelationships, is a very complex and arduous task. To show what we mean, note the different possibilities of reconstruction and subrelationships of the four related languages A, B, C, and D (the asterisks before X, Y, and Z indicate proto-languages):

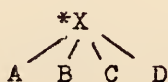
Three reconstructions:



Two reconstructions:



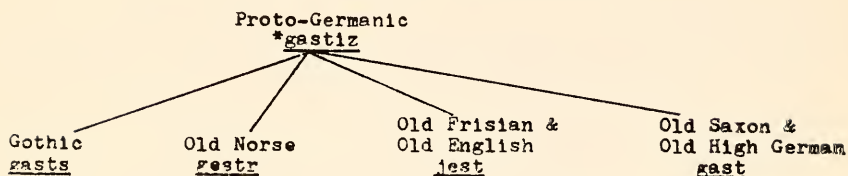
One reconstruction:



Taken from Henry M. Hoenigswald, *Language Change and Linguistic Reconstruction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Phoenix Edition, 1965), pp. 148-150.

⁸ Bloomfield, *Language*, p. 305.

FIG. 1
EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF "GUEST"
FROM PROTO-GERMANIC



⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 312-313.

¹⁰ Lehman, *Historical Linguistics*, p. 41.

¹¹ Joseph H. Greenberg, *Essays in Linguistics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Phoenix Edition, 1963), p. 73.

A Study of Luke 14:26:

Jesus Calls His Disciples to A Life of Supreme Commitment

LOUIS F. GOUGH

*"If any one comes to me
and does not hate his own father and mother and wife
and children and brothers and sisters
and even his own life,
he is not able to be my disciple."*

(Luke 14:26)

JUST WHAT is Jesus saying here? On the surface he seems to be requiring men who would be disciples to despise relatives closest to them as a price to be paid for the privilege of discipleship. But the injunction, understood in this way, is out of character with Jesus and all that he taught as recorded in the gospels and with other sacred literature of both the Old and New Testaments.

Could he who took children in his arms and blessed them command fathers to hate their own sons and daughters? He also had shown tenderness and respect for children in saying that for one to enter the kingdom of God, he must be "converted and become as little children" (Matt. 18:3). On another occasion Jesus had said: "Suffer little children to come to me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God" (Luke 18:16).

It is also difficult to understand how Jesus could ask men to hate their wives and at the same time inspire Paul to write in the Ephesian Letter: "Husbands, love your wives as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it" (5:25). In fact if Christ demanded of his followers that they hate, or detest, their

wives, would he not be contradicting the basic principle of marital relations as divinely ordained in the beginning of the human race and as upheld by himself in his public ministry? "Male and female made he them. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh... What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder" (Mark 10:6-9).

If we are to connote detestation and feelings of extreme enmity towards others with the word "hate" as used by Jesus, do we not face extreme difficulty with his teachings as recorded in Matthew's Gospel? "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor, and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, 'Love you your enemies and pray for those who persecute you'" (Matt. 5:42-43). And how shall we harmonize the injunction "to hate" with a statement which is representative of the ethic of love as taught in the whole Bible and as given by an inspired disciple of Jesus? "Every one who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him" (I John 3:15).

Two final questions which might be raised at the surface of our text: Is it not true that to hate one's father and mother is to break the Fifth Commandment? And to "hate" one's "own life," is that not transgressing the second Great Commandment "You shall love your neighbor *as yourself*" (Matt. 22:39)?

In light of the whole body of Jesus' teachings the contradictions implied by these questions are not in keeping with his unity of thought and action displayed throughout the New Testament. An absolute absence of disunity is evident in all of his actions and words when correctly interpreted and understood. A key to understanding Jesus' words may be here: As true of all great teachers, particularly of the Orient, Jesus did not intend that all of his teachings should be taken literally. One of the methods which he used was of the sort that his words would tend to seize the attention of his hearers and lead them into a search for the deep and rich meaning which was to be found below the surface-meaning.

Jesus often stated a principle in a startling way in the use of a paradox or other figures of speech, leaving it up to his hearers to learn just what he was actually meaning to say. In commenting upon the words of our text, Alfred Plummer and Norval Geldenhuys speak of the startling effect that Jesus' use of the word "hate" had upon his audience, and the effective learning

process that was initiated. Geldenhuys in *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* observes: "Here Jesus, as he often did, utters the principle in a startling, categorical manner and leaves it to his hearers to find out in the light of His other pronouncements what the qualifications are to which His utterance is subordinated."¹ Perhaps Jesus utilized such a method as reported in our text. George Buttrick believes that Jesus executed the method excellently: "*And hate not*: the word repels. It is a staggering word. But then it was intended to be."² To be sure Jesus' words stagger us. But did he intend for his hearers to take them literally? Or did he allow for a figurative or idiomatic interpretation of his word in this text? Just what did he mean? And if the word "hate" should be qualified in the light of all his teachings and in other divine pronouncements found in Holy Scripture, what are those qualifications, and how should the whole text be interpreted?

First, let us look at the word "to hate" as it is used in the Biblical literature. The Greek verb *misein* is used by Luke in our text. In most contexts it is translated accurately by the English verb "to hate" with the connotation "to detest," "to feel extreme enmity toward." The Hebrew word *sane'* and the Aramaic *senu'*, the equivalents of *misein* are usually accurately translated by the English verb "to hate." However, there are contexts in which the Hebrew verb is more accurately translated "to love a person less in comparison to another person." In Genesis 29:30-31 we read: "And he (Jacob) went in also unto Rachel, and he loved (*wayye'ehabd*) also Rachel more than Leah. . . . And Yahweh saw that Leah was hated, (*senu'ah*) and he opened her womb." It is evident here in light of the larger context covering the whole story of the lives of Jacob and his wives that he did not detest or feel strong enmity toward Leah; but more correctly, in comparison his love for Rachel was greater than it was for Leah. Rachel was his favorite wife. The implication that Leah was loved less in verse 30 is translated "hated" (*senu'ah*) in our English Bibles at verse 31. It is evident the verb in this latter instance should be translated idiomatically "loved less than." A similar use of the idiom is used in Deuteronomy 21:15, where two wives are referred to as one loved and the other hated, which might be translated: "one favorite," and the other "second fiddle." The context goes on to relate that if the second-rate wife bears the first child, he should have first-born inheritance rights in spite of the father's attitude towards his wives.

In Malachi 1:2, 3 we have another instance of this idiom: "I loved (*wa'ohabd*) Jacob; but Esau I hated (*sane'thi*). It is not that God detested Esau and felt extreme enmity towards him. Rather, because Esau "despised, (felt contempt, or disregarded) (*bazah*) for his birthright" (Gen. 25:34), God turned to Jacob, who responded to the call of God to be a channel through whom God's holy purpose for his people could be realized.

Furthermore, whenever the Greek verb *misein* in the LXX is used to translate the Hebrew verb *sane'* in a context which calls for the idiom, *misein* should not be translated in the English "to hate" with the connotation to detest or to feel extreme enmity toward. For this reason Abbott-Smith in *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament*, 3rd edition, gives the definitions for *misein*: "to hate, (sometimes with modified sense of indifference or relative disregard for one thing in comparison to another—cf. Matt. 6:24; Luke 14:26; 16:13; John 12:25; Romans 9:13 (LXX))." Frederic Godet also accepts the latter, idiomatic definition: "The word *hate* in this passage (Luke 14:26) is often interpreted in the sense of *loving less*."³

J. A. Findlay in his commentary on Luke (*The Abingdon Bible Commentary*) is of the opinion that "the *hate* of verse 26 (Lk. 14) goes back to an Aramaic word which means 'love less' so that Matthew 10:37, 38 is an accurate rendering of the meaning, if not of the actual words of Jesus" (*ad loc*).

That Aramaic word, as referred to earlier in this study very possibly is *sena'*. Let us now look at this parallel passage in Matthew to observe how the First Evangelist reports the words of Jesus.

Matthew in his gospel at 10:37 reports the words of Jesus in parallel with those given in Luke's gospel as follows: "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me" (N.A.S.B.: N.T.) The Greek text reads: "*Ho philon patera e metera huper eme ouk estin mou axios; kai ho philon huion e thugatera huper eme ouk estin mou axios.*" It is possible that the producer of the First Gospel translated the idiomatic Aramaic word which Jesus might have used into clear and simple Greek. Luke also could have executed his translation as validly but in a different manner, retaining the literary style very similar to the original. Since the Greek verb *misein* is capable of a double meaning (with the more harsh and quite obscure connotations as is the case with the Hebrew verb *sane'*

and the Aramaic verb *sena'*, Luke could have correctly employed *misein* and thereby preserved the paradox, which no doubt attended Jesus original speech. Thereby the striking force of the Master Teacher's style would be transmitted through the translation. H. K. Luce in his commentary on the Gospel of Luke characterized the rendering in the Third Gospel as "Luke's harsher version."⁴ Luce is probably correct in observing that it is "*no doubt more original*" than the rendering in the First Gospel. A. R. C. Leaney is of the opinion that Luke has preserved in 14:26 "what seems to be the more original form of a saying which Matthew has adapted to a later time at 10:37."⁵

Since, however, a double meaning for the word "hate" in the English language is not used as it is in the case of the Biblical languages, the not-so-rich but more-easily-understood rendering of the original word of Jesus might best be given in a clear, and if necessary diffuse translation, in the English versions. A loss in richness and forcefulness of style is thereby sustained, but that is often the price that is paid for the otherwise convenience of a translation out of the original literature. Kenneth N. Taylor in *The Living Gospels* has followed this method with the translation: "... must love Me far more than he does his own father..." (Luke 14:26b). The Berkeley Version of the New Testament has it: "... without prizing far less dearly." Olaf M. Norlie in his *The New Testament: A New Translation* had done well in rendering the text in understandable English and at the same time preserving something of the paradox: "... and does not, in comparison, hate..." In other words, the love which a person has for Jesus, if he wishes to be his disciple, must be so much greater than his love for the ones dearest to him, that by comparison the difference in intensity of love would be as great as that which exists between opposites—between love and hate.

Finally, now that we have arrived at an understanding of the word "hate," what was Jesus saying as he is reported in Luke 14:26? Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. He had "set his face stedfastly" in that direction, knowing full well what would befall him there. Crucifixion awaited him. In his spirit he had already assumed the cross upon which he would be hung by "his own" whom he loved and whom he had come into the world to save. There were others of "his own" who would follow him to Jerusalem. They had left all to follow him. Jesus loved them; and knowing that he would have to depart from them "he loved

them to the fullest measure." Jesus also knew that his disciples would go through an ordeal in Jerusalem that would try their very souls. It would be a cross for them—not to be equated with his cross, because the sins and burdens of the whole world would be put upon him. But the cross which the disciples would have to bear in Jerusalem while their beloved Master would be rejected and killed ignominiously would be next to more than they could bear. And this would only be the beginning of the crosses which they would be called on to bear down through life as they ventured to follow the Son of God, who was also "the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world." Being aware of the extreme demands which following him would place upon his disciples, and knowing that only total commitment in a life of full and complete submission to his will would enable his disciples to persevere faithfully, Jesus called for undivided allegiance on their part.

This meant that all other allegiances and affections must be subordinated to the allegiance and devotion that the disciples would give their one supreme Master and Lord. His will would dominate their wills, even to the extent that should the solicitations of the dearest and closest relative come into conflict with loyalty to his Master, the disciple must take the latter course at the cost of separation from the loved one if needs be. He might be called upon to give up his very life in the pursuance of the Master's will for him.

John C. Ryle explains the words of Jesus similarly: "He meant that those who follow Him must love Him with a deeper love even than their nearest and dearest connections, or their own lives. . . . If the claims of our relatives and the claims of Christ come into collision, the claims of relatives must give way. We must choose rather to displease those we love most upon earth, than to displease Him who died for us on the cross."⁶ Erich Klostermann in his *Das Lukasevangelium* sees in this requirement for supreme allegiance a willingness on the part of the disciple to accept martyrdom.⁷ George Buttrick recognized in this "instant and unqualified loyalty," demanded by Jesus "proof of his divine claim."⁸

For the extreme sacrifice which he called upon his followers to make, Jesus compensated with infinitely greater rewards. "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who shall not receive many times as much at

this time, and in the age to come, eternal life" (Luke 18:29f, N.A.S.B.).

A final note in our exploration into the meaning of Luke 14:26: Still another paradox is implicit in Jesus' demand that a disciple hate father, mother and other kinfolk. Even if we accept "to hate" (*misein*) in its obscure connotation, "to love less," we find that when Christ becomes the supreme object of our love, our capacity for love of relatives is increased in direct proportion to the enlargement of our love for Christ. The more we love him, the greater the capacity and the better the quality of our love for others; and at the same time the difference between our "first love" for Christ and that for all others which is subordinate to it, is best likened to the magnitude of difference which obtains between two opposites, such as love and hate. In fact a man who does not first love God "with his whole heart" is very limited in his capacity to love others with a quality which is free from self-interestedness and possessiveness.

George Buttrick gives expression to this paradoxical phenomenon: "Our human loyalties clash, and they become debased unless they are unified and purified by a supreme devotion. . . . That strange word *hate* (as it was used by Jesus) is the one road to abiding love."⁹ An eighteenth-century prayer of Bishop Joseph Butler quoted by Buttrick certainly is to the point: "Help us, by the due exercise of them (our affections), to improve to Perfection; till all partial affection be lost in that entire universal one, and Thou, O God, shalt be all in all."¹⁰

¹ Norval Geldenhuys, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke, The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1954), *ad loc.*

² George Arthur Buttrick, *The Gospel According to St. Luke; Exposition Chapters 13-18*, Vol. 8 of *The Interpreter's Bible* (12 Vol.: New York: Abingdon Press, 1952), *ad loc.*

³ Frederick Godet, *A Commentary on the Gospel of St. Luke*, trans. by M. D. Cusin (*Clark's Foreign Theological Library*, 4th Series, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1875), *ad loc.*

⁴ H. K. Luce, *The Gospel According to St. Luke (Cambridge Greek Testament*, Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1933), *ad loc.*

⁵ A. R. C. Leaney, *A Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke* (London: Adam and Charles Black, (c. 1958). *ad loc.*

⁶ John Charles Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels for Family and Private Use; St. Luke*, ninth ed. (London: William Hunt & Co., 1890), *ad loc.*

⁷ Erich Klostermann, *Das Lukasevangelium*, Band II.1 of *Handbuch zum Neuen Testament* (Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1919), *ad loc.*

⁸ Buttrick, *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

Christian Comprehensiveness

D. RAY HEISEY

THE WRITER to the Hebrews develops one major argument throughout his epistle. His argument is this: There is a kind of tide drifting you away from Christ; therefore, be careful to keep on due course.

In his analysis of this drift, the writer suggests at least four causes, one being formalism. The community to which he was writing, located probably near Rome, had been observing the forms of religion so long that the forms were becoming ends in themselves. Another cause was familiarity with religious facts. The community had grown sluggish; they had made Jesus Christ dull. A third cause was a combination of persecution and disillusionment. A storm had snapped their moorings and they had dragged their anchors. Rome had reversed its position toward Christians and some were persecuted and some were losing heart and hope in regard to the parousia. A fourth cause was complacency. Formalism, familiarity, and disappointment all tumbled together. Spiritual stagnation was inevitable. The community had an arrested development of Christian faith. It was staying static.

I don't think I need to spend much time suggesting the contemporaneousness of this analysis of Hebrews for our religious situation today. We hear no end of opinions about the state of Christianity and the organized church. It would appear, however, that there are four major answers people are giving. I would like to examine these responses and then show how remarkably they correspond to the correctives which the writer to the Hebrews offered.

First, there are the Christian radicals who say the church is sick and what it needs to do is to break with its theological

past and its institutional life.¹ The spokesmen for this point of view are numerous. Let me cite four of the many who could be quoted. In 1963, J. A. T. Robinson's book *HONEST TO GOD*² called into question many of the basic assumptions which Christians had held for years. "The first thing we must be ready to let go," he said, "is our image of God himself." The death of God theology became very popular.

In 1965, Harvey Cox's *THE SECULAR CITY* claimed that "we must learn . . . to speak of God in a secular fashion and find a non-religious interpretation of biblical concepts. It will do no good to cling to our religious versions of Christianity in the hope that one day religion will once again be back." It is disappearing forever, he said, and that means we can now let go and immerse ourselves "in the new world of the secular city."³

The next year, 1966, Joseph Fletcher published *SITUATION ETHICS: THE NEW MORALITY*. This book was called "racy," "blood-chilling," "a watershed in the history of moral theology," and "another example of the rebellion of fallen man against his creator." In any moral decision, Fletcher argued, the key question is: "What does God's love demand of me in this particular situation?" It was hailed as "a manifesto of individual freedom and individual responsibility, elaborated within an ethic of love, which extricates modern man from rigid, archaic rules and codes."⁴

In 1967, Robert Jenson, in his book, *A RELIGION AGAINST ITSELF*, said that there seem to be more and more people who believe in Christ and yet wish there were some way of believing other than being religious. He called our supernaturalism fraudulent, and continued:

The religious mimicry of our congregations, the rhetoric of our denominations, the theologies of our Sunday schools, the pseudo-divine personifications of our economic ideologies together with the bloody war-liturgies of their worship, the Sunday-morning-radio "Spark of the divine in every man," Sallman's Jesus and "My God and I" share one common feature: they all make one sick, and in exactly the same way that celluloid carnations and "lifetime" Christmas trees make one sick. They are unmistakably phony.⁵

The Radical Christianity response to the sickness of the church is similar to the response of student rebels in our colleges and universities. There is the growing conviction that the exist-

ing institutions, as now constituted—whether the university, the church, or the political party—cannot effectively adapt to the urgent needs of the contemporary situation. The only alternative is to abandon them. A matrix of frustration and anguish is producing a community committed to radical changes.

A second way of responding to the diagnosis is this. The church is sick but what we need to do is not break with the past but go back to it—to the faith once delivered to the saints. We need to renounce the modern attempts to make Christ relevant and stop allowing the church to be shaped so much by the world's mold. Leon Sutch, pastor of the Epworth Methodist Church in Elgin, Ill., puts it this way:

On the theological right are those who would retreat into the past, by a resurgence of fundamentalism. Affronted by the church's involvement in civil rights, the war on poverty and peace movements, and afraid of the rapid change of events around them, many laymen find this retreat a near-perfect solution to their problems. It arouses warm memories of childhood, absolves them from responsibility for the world, reassures them that God is just where he was yesterday.⁶

In a recent book called, *RELEVANCE: THE ROLE OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE 20th CENTURY*, Richard Halverson says, "Because humanity's problem is congenital—sin in the human heart—there is only one solution . . . What is the answer to this broken world? . . . The Bible answer, the intelligent answer, the one adequate answer, can be summed up in a word, 'reconciliation' . . . Jesus Christ knew that war and death were due to a malignancy in the human heart which could be cured only by His own sacrifice on the cross. He entered history and determined a course that ultimately took him to the cross to solve this root problem once and for all—forever."⁷

A third way of responding to the sickness of the church is . . . the church isn't sick, the critics are simply using the wrong criteria for judging.⁸ They tend to think of the church as merely one among all the other causes, institutions, and idealisms. When the word "cause" is used to describe Christianity, it reduces the church to everything else we think about as a cause. So, we are inclined to think, says Paul Holmer of Yale Divinity School, that the church too "lives by money, thrives with planning, prospers with clever and brainy people, needs widespread support to get its work done, and, above all, needs to progress and to change with the age."⁹

Most movements or causes can be judged by results. Are they accomplishing anything? Are Negroes in Alabama voting? Is open housing in Cleveland a reality? Is the war in Vietnam de-escalating? Is the draft law being changed? Are students being placed on faculty committees and given a voice in building curriculum? These are legitimate questions for members of human causes designed to bring immediate results.

But then we tend to use the results theory with the church. Are we growing numerically? How many new members did the church have last year? How much increase was there in the budget? Such questions mean we are thinking of the church as any other cause. It is like a business. There is, of course, a place for recognizing the similarities between the church and other institutions. But differences are much more important. Again, Paul Holmer says:

The strangeness of the churches is safeguarded best when it is realized that one does not live so much for the harvest as one does for the quality of the sowing. To believe in God is to be able to conceive of the whole of life as a time of sowing, and reaping is left to others and even eternity and God.

By itself, this willingness to postpone the harvest stretches the concept of cause all out of shape. The church is not one more cause on parity with others. Instead, it is the house and people of the Lord, a place and vocation for the people of God. But, it is always sowing, seldom reaping; always building, never done. One has to get used to thinking about it in its own terms, otherwise one is invariably thinking wrongly about it.¹⁰

You remember that when the 70 returned to Jesus with joy because they had achieved results in his name, he quickly corrected their distorted view. He said, "Don't rejoice about this, but rather because your names are written in heaven—because you are in a new relationship."

Now, of course, this new relationship will provide the motive for action and behavior appropriate to the new status. But the church is not a community that can be judged sick or healthy merely on the same terms as any other cause.

There is a fourth way of responding to the sickness of the church. If the church is sick, don't despair, for the characteristic mode of the church's existence is death and resurrection.¹¹

Judaism was completed with the coming of Christianity. The old had to die that the new could live. The body of Jesus had

to die that the spirit of Christ could live everywhere. Medieval Romanism was dying and the Reformed church grew out of it in new life. In our day we see evidence of dying taking place and newness of life coming forth. William A. Visser 't Hooft has written, "Again and again the Church needs to be protected against the downward pull of its own life by which it becomes an end in itself and ceases to be the obedient servant of its Lord."¹²

This view claims that the church as the body of Christ is called upon to suffer the same fate as the physical body of its Lord.

It cannot be the aim of the church (says John Cantelon) to increase its community, its prestige or influence in the world; it must be the aim of the church to be obedient. God may increase the size of the church, or he may decrease it. In any case the church must live by the evangelical law that he who would save his life will lose it and he who loses his life for the sake of Christ will find it. This means that the church as well as the individual Christian, must expect to find renewal only when it learns to give life for the life of the world.¹³

Just as the church, at the very heart of its worship, is celebrating the death and resurrection of Christ, so the church at the very heart of its work, is practicing death and resurrection in obedience to its Lord. If the church seems to be on the verge of a nervous breakdown, then maybe it is because something we are holding on to needs to die. Perhaps a shakedown is in order. Perhaps one of the root causes is "the theological failure of the church to provide a Christian dynamic at the lay level." Where are the Keith Millers in our congregations? Is anyone out there in the pews getting "the taste of new wine"? Or are they serving on too many committees, planning too many programs, attending too many meetings, spending too much time keeping the wheels of the machinery moving? These are the questions raised legitimately by the fourth group of respondents. The rhythm of death and resurrection—this is the cycle of all life, the pattern of existence of all organic bodies, the very meaning of the church.

The point being made here is that no one has a corner on the truth. There is a kernel of truth in each of the four answers we've considered. We need the comprehensiveness of Christ who "saved what was valuable in what he destroyed and destroyed nothing where it was desirable rather to fulfill than

to destroy.”¹⁴ He was forever pulling surprises on those disciples who thought they had things figured out, who thought they knew the kind of kingdom he was building. I was talking with a pastor several weeks ago who said that he was the only “evangelical” in his town’s ministerium. The others won’t associate because they don’t approve of what the so-called liberals are doing.

The reason people hold opposing views and beliefs is not so much that truth is absolute, but that truth takes different forms—there is ideal truth and then there is actual or empirical truth. Also, truth has a certain incomprehensibility about it—a quality of infinity. Can any man presume to think that his finite mind comprehends the infinity of God’s truth? Then, too, persons themselves have different temperaments, tastes, interests, and impulses which cause opposing views. Also, language is restrictive. It can only show one side of truth, by a figure or image. It cannot convey any truth whole or by literal embodiment. These are all important reasons why we have differing views of spiritual truth.¹⁵

If we can agree that no one has all the truth, the important question, it seems to me, is: Are we seeking to know the truth lodged in these opposing views? The comprehensive spirit ascends to a higher position and encompasses whatever truth makes the extremes sacred to their proponents.

Paul’s prayer for the Ephesians was that Christ should dwell in their hearts and that they should be so rooted in love that they would have the power to comprehend—that Greek word means to grasp, seize, take hold of—with all the people of God the breadth and length and height and depth of that love.

I said that the writer’s argument was that the Christian community was in danger of drifting away from Christ. This brings us to the correctives which the writer to the Hebrews offered. Observe that he didn’t have just one simple antidote. He told those second generation Christians, who had drifted into religious formalism, that they needed to rediscover religion—or better yet—rediscover God for themselves. Religious forms, he said, don’t have a hold over you. It seems to me, that at the heart of it, this is precisely what the Christian radicals are saying. Those in the conservative-evangelical tradition, I think, haven’t taken the radicals seriously enough. They tend to write them off, saying, after all, anyone who would advocate that “God is dead” can’t have anything to offer. But have we tried to see what they

mean? We *do* need to break with certain accumulated trappings of religion. God *does* need to be interpreted in the thought patterns and language forms of the contemporary generation. God himself doesn't change, but our concepts of him, and of the ways He works, do. And if this interpretation is done seriously and authentically, Christians may find themselves staying more securely on due course.

The writer to the Hebrews told those Christians in the second place that their overfamiliarity with religious facts could be corrected by re-exploring the wonders of their faith. He tried to show them the romance of doctrine. He described Jesus as the Brightness of God's glory and the express image of his person. The emphasis of Christian evangelicals on supernaturalism is a needed one. The secular Christians need to re-explore the exciting aspects of Bethlehem, calvary, and the rolled-away stone and their supernatural meanings if their emphasis is going to remain balanced. But if the Christian radical takes his here-and-now too seriously, I think the fundamentalist takes his doctrinal fundamentals too seriously at the expense of the here-and-now.

For example, I think it's possible to oversimplify by saying, as Halverson does, that sin is the root of all the social ills and the world's problems. But remember that Jesus said of the blind man, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him."

The third cause of drifting—persecution and disillusionment—the writer says may be corrected by exercising patience and faith, believing that God is at work after all. This is the word of the Christian idealists in our day. The church, engaged in a time of sowing, is a different kind of community. When a pastor gets discouraged with results and is persecuted with an identity crisis, when parishioners wonder whether all their efforts are worth it, they need to remember that the church isn't just another cause. It is God at work.

The fourth cause of drifting away—complacency—must be answered, says the writer, with an admonition to spiritual growth and maturity. There isn't any such thing as a "finished" Christian. Knowing Christ is not knowledge of a static kind. Here I see a correlation with the truth that the Christian renewalists offer. They are saying that a fuller development necessarily involves renewal—renewal by the process of continuing death and resurrection .

The responses to the condition of the church are varied, The writer to the Hebrews offered several which find their parallel in our day. I ask in closing, Are our eyes open to seeing truth where we're not accustomed to seeing truth? Are our ears tuned to hearing truth when there is no instinct for hearing truth from *that* direction?

Leaving the times and the seasons to God, looking beyond ourselves and our own religious and provincial boundaries, let us enlarge the freedom of our faith and the comprehensiveness of our spirit, becoming full-grown men, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

¹ Leon Sutch, "Essay on the Church," *Reflections: A Journal of Opinion at Yale Divinity School*, 66 (January, 1969), 5.

² J. A. T. Robinson, *Honest To God* (Philadelphia, 1963).

³ Harvey Cox, *The Secular City* (New York, 1965), p. 4.

⁴ Joseph Fletcher, *Situation Ethics: The New Morality* (Philadelphia, 1966), back cover.

⁵ Robert Jenson, *A Religion Against Itself* (Richmond, 1967), pp. 13-14.

⁶ Sutch, p. 5.

⁷ Richard Halverson, *Relevances: The Role of Christianity in the Twentieth Century* (Waco, Texas, 1968), pp. 85, 46, 22-23.

⁸ See Paul Holmer, "On Criticizing the Church," *Reflection*, 66 (January, 1969).

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ John Cantelon, *A Protestant Approach to the Campus Ministry* (Philadelphia, 1964), p. 109.

¹² Quoted in Cantelon, p. 109.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

¹⁴ Horace Bushnell, "Christian Comprehensiveness," in H. Shelton Smith (ed.), *Horace Bushnell* (New York, 1965), p. 109. This article by Bushnell supplied much of the impetus for the present discussion.

¹⁵ See Bushnell, pp. 110 ff.

Baxter Collection Added To Seminary Library

James Houston Baxter and His Private Collection

THE Ashland Theological Seminary Library has been enriched by the addition of more than four thousand volumes acquired from the private library of the recently retired Dr. James Houston Baxter, distinguished Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History at the University of St. Andrews in Edinburgh.

As the current world authority on St. Augustine, Dr. Baxter has collected not only the works of St. Augustine, but also numerous volumes written in the centuries since the time of the great churchman reflecting St. Augustine's influence on the Christian Church and world thought. The noted scholar has retained these works and plans to spend his remaining years compiling the definitive work on the great Christian figure.

The works catalogued and placed on the shelves in the Ashland Seminary library show the wide interests of Dr. Baxter. These include a notable collection of works on church history encompassing extensive materials on Scottish history, both ecclesiastical and secular, the Reformation period in Great Britain and on the Continent, and representative works on Puritanism and Methodism.

The collection obtained from Professor Baxter by the Seminary includes a large number of secular works. The Baxter materials reflect an extensive fascination for information on Poland. Among these are works on language, science, history, literature, and folk-lore in English and in several other languages. The well-thumbed pages show that Dr. Baxter's library did not remain unused on his shelves. Indeed, the cataloguing of these materials was slowed by the temptation of the cataloguer to read the marginal comments of Dr. Baxter and his analyses


and summaries of the content of volumes noted in English, French, Hebrew, Latin, and Greek.

The scope of the scholarly interests of James Houston Baxter is reflected not only in his library, but also in the list of honors he has received and in his many scholarly projects. A few of these gleaned from the current edition of *Who's Who* include, along with medals and prizes in the classics and arts, the editorship of the *New Dictionary of Medieval Latin*, contributions to other dictionaries and encyclopedias, compilation of the index to the *Scottish Historical Review*, author of many periodical articles. He is a member of the Naples Academy, Associate member of the Royal Belgian Academy, the Royal Flemish Academy, the Societe de l'Histoire du Protestantisme francais. He was on the Scottish Record Commission and the Scottish Dictionary Commission. From 1933 to 1939 he was in charge of excavating the Byzantine Imperial Palace at Istambul. Many of his books are complimentary copies sent to him by noted scholar-friends the world over.

St. Andrews to Ashland Theological Seminary! The Seminary considers itself fortunate to incorporate these materials, the personal gatherings of a great scholar, into its rapidly expanding resources.

Miss Agnes Ballantyne
Library Cataloguer, Retired





ASHLAND THEOLOGICAL BULLETIN

Ashland Theological Seminary

Ashland, Ohio

Spring 1971

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INTRODUCTION TO THE CURRENT ISSUE

THE ISSUE of the *Ashland Theological Bulletin* presented here centers upon a theme of widespread interest and concern of the times, namely, Christian ministries in the current situation. The approach is both theological and practical as the various writers discuss facets of the concern.

"The Word and the Tables" by Dr. Pfeiffer was the address at the occasion of the dedication of the new seminary apartment building in August of 1970. Dr. Pfeiffer presents a philosophy of Christian ministry calling the church to own the diverse aspects of its obligation to minister to the needs of men.

The second article is from the hand of one who has experienced a variety of ministries including the urban pastorate, counselor to delinquents, and professor of Bible and religion in a liberal arts school. From these perspectives George Spink asks the question, "Who is a Minister?"

Five articles on a theme consider approaches to ministry in the seventies. These are statements from men representing a broad spectrum of experience over a large span of years. Each is writing from study and experience in the areas of his concerns. It is hoped that these articles will help the reader to develop a sympathetic understanding of various ministries and to consider the respective areas as potential callings in Christian ministering today. It is in no way implied that the five approaches here presented cover the gamut of possibilities in Christian ministry. They are but representative.

Owen H. Alderfer, Editor

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(continued on page 18)

THE WORD AND THE TABLES

CHARLES F. PEIFFER

IN AN AGE which clamors for change, old problems have a way of recurring. In every age the church has had to determine its priorities. The preaching of the Word, and the response to human physical need in the name of Christ, were and are necessary parts of every Christian witness. The Epistle of James reminds us that there were those in the earliest church whose response to the poor was, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled." Of such pious talk without the addition of a helping hand, James scornfully comments, "What does it profit?" (cf. James 2:14-17).

As we meet the church in Acts 6 we find that there was concern for the poor—in this instance the widows—and that the apostles supervised the distribution of appropriate supplies. Problems arose, however, when two factions within the church exhibited partisan spirits. One group was Hellenistically oriented. These were Jews who had accepted the Greek language, mode of dress, and general cultural orientation. In modern terminology we would say that they were westernized.

The other group, called the Hebrews (Acts 6:1) had clung to the Aramaic language and the traditional Jewish usages. These were the descendants, spiritual if not physical, of the Jews who had suffered persecution because of their loyalty to the Jewish faith during the persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes during the second century B.C. As a party they had little sympathy with those whom they regarded as traitors to the faith, compromisers with things Greek, hence foreign and unorthodox.

The preaching of Christ was directed at all segments of the Jewish community, and we find both Hellenists and Hebrews taking their place in the Christian church. It is one of the glories of discipleship, that all sorts and conditions of men are called to take up a cross and follow Jesus. The fisherman and the tax collector, the zealot and the doubter are numbered among the disciples. Martha who served, and Mary who chose to sit at Jesus' feet and learn from Him had differing temperaments, but unquestioned love for the Savior. At its best the church ignores distinctions between circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond and free men. All are one in Christ.

Seldom, however, has that ideal been realized. The earliest church had the same human problems we have. It may be popular for preachers to call us back to the Christianity of the first century, but honest students of the Bible and of history will realize that the fact of sin was as evident in that age as it is today. As the church grew, old rivalries asserted themselves. The Hellenistic party charged the Hebrews with neglecting the Hellenistic widows at the distribution of alms. Whether or not the charge was true we do not know. The fact that it was made suggests the presence of factionalism and the accusation of what we would call today discrimination.

The response of the apostles to the charge may prove instructive to us in today's situation: "It is not right that we should give up preaching the Word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brethren, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word" (Acts 6:2-4).

We must say to the credit of the apostles that they were ready to accept criticism. They made no attempt to excuse themselves or to protest that they had not been guilty of the alleged negligence. If a problem existed they were ready to face it head on, and to attempt to find a solution. They were in positions of leadership, and they recognized the obligations of leadership.

The apostles accepted without question the proposition that the church had an obligation to "serve tables." Jesus had fed the multitudes, even when his disciples were ready to send them away. He had shown compassion on the blind, the lame, the leper, the poor. His church could do no less than exhibit the mind of Christ when faced with human need. James' dictum is clear: "So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead" (Jas. 2:17).

The church has often been accused of irrelevance. We must admit that the warning of James has not always been heeded. Christians may be so enamoured of Bible study that Bible practice is neglected. Christian fellowship may be such a precious experience that we forget that Jesus was known as a friend to the publicans and sinners.

Happily every age has produced Christians who have been genuinely concerned about the welfare of fellow humans. The emancipation of slaves, prison reform, improved labor conditions and kindred movements have been directed by such evangelical Christians as Wilberforce and Booth. A concern for the physical

welfare of mankind is a mark of discipleship. The church must be willing to serve tables.

Yet, faced with a growing church and multitudinous demands on their time, the apostles chose to delegate the serving of tables to others. The task was not menial. Those who serve tables must be men of good reputation, Spirit-filled, and known for their wisdom. The work is honorable, and well qualified people must do it, but the apostles sensed other needs.

With a special sense of vocation, they said, "We will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word." Here is an important principle which applies to every age. The church is concerned about the material welfare of mankind. Yet it is more than a society for human improvement. It is a spiritual entity with spiritual resources. Prayer and the study of God's Word are not luxuries which can be postponed until the pressing issues of the moment are resolved. Indeed the issues can never be resolved as long as men turn their backs on the Savior who bids the weary and heavy laden to come to him. If some have erred in assuming that all problems can be resolved on the basis of Christian faith, others have erred in assuming that man can live by bread alone.

While we do not take to ourselves the title of apostle, we do feel that the principle enunciated by the apostles is valid for every age. There must be some Christians who give themselves to prayer and the Word. It is the responsibility of the "pastors and teachers" (or "teaching pastors") of Ephesians 4:11-12, to equip the saints for the work of ministry. Ministry, service, is the work of all Christians. All are called upon to be spiritual activists. That activity, however, must be grounded in God's Revelation of Himself in Scripture. It must be energized by God through prayer. Prayer and the Word distinguish the concerned Christian from the secular activist. Sometimes both share a desire for common immediate goals. The secular activist sees human betterment as an end in itself, but the Christian labors among men with the glory of God as his ultimate aim. The Christian does all that the secularist does to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and otherwise show his concern for mankind. The added spiritual dimension, however, indicates that the Christian sees that man has basic needs beyond the physical. Man's fears, frustrations, and sense of sin need more than the aid of a social worker. They need the presence of one who has given himself to prayer and the Word.

In many of our churches the pendulum has swung from a sterile spirit of introspection—a dead orthodoxy, if you please—to a heartfelt concern for the needs of all men. The racist, the exploiter, the polluter of the environment: they are the new Judases. Military involvement, the drug problem, urban blight and similar contemporary problems are the subjects of our sermons week after week. This proves, in contemporary jargon, that we are “with it.”

Has the pendulum swung too far? If we once had theology with no social concerns, are we now in danger of having social concerns with no theology? The secularist will rejoice in that tendency. He may even seek the ministry as a means of carrying forth his secularist program. Yet the Christian must object. Serve tables? Assuredly! Prayer? A part of Christian life and ministry. The Word? A lamp to our feet and a light to our path. It is not “either . . . or.” It is “both . . . and.” Acknowledge that there are some in the church whose mission is to “devote themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word.” Honor them for their labors, and pray that they may be a blessing and a source of instruction and strength. Acknowledge, too, that spiritual men must be at the forefront of the table-serving mission. They are Christ’s ministers, too.

The church has been likened to a body with many members, each of which needs the other. Those whose prime concern is prayer and the Word will need the table servers to keep them alert to the needs of the world as it is, lest an “ivory tower” type of Christianity be produced. Those whose prime work is table serving will need the spiritual instruction and undergirding of well trained, spiritually motivated men of the Word who are apt to teach as well as ready to learn. Without both the Word and the tables the church is powerless and irrelevant. Only with both, each given its appropriate emphasis, can the church really serve as Christ’s ambassadors to the world.

WHO IS A MINISTER?

GEORGE S. SPINK

WHEN I ANNOUNCED my decision to leave the city church which I had served for ten years, many considered this act as "giving up the ministry." It did not matter to these people that I would be teaching the eternal truths of Christianity to young college students. What was uppermost in their minds was the all-too-narrow concept of the Christian ministry as being solely centered in the pastor-congregation relationship. I begin with this incident in order to point to the need for Christians to expand their concept of the term Christian "ministry." The tendency of the American mind to pigeonhole or label concepts as if they have only one mode of interpretation applies to the average churchman in his church relationships as well as other sectors of American life. Far too many understand the expression "Christian ministry" as referring to the professionally trained clergyman and nothing else.

If one were to ask "Who is a minister?", in general the answer would involve the idea of anyone who is trained and authorized to carry out the spiritual functions of a church, conduct worship, administer sacraments, preach and pastor a local congregation. It must be admitted that this idea is basically Christian and can be traced to the early church.¹ However, to limit the meaning of Christian ministry to this concept is to miss the larger concept of "ministry" also set forth in the New Testament. The Greek word for "ministry" is *diakonia*. It is significant that this term was in New Testament times the most favored way of referring not only to specific church workers but also to all those who professed to be followers of Christ rendering service in his name.² It is in this latter sense that Protestantism historically has used the expression "priesthood of all believers."³ The New Testament refers to every believer in the generalized sense of his ministry under the terms saint, priest, and king. "All Christians," says Luther, "are truly of the spiritual estate, and there is no difference among them, save of office alone. As St. Paul says, we are all one body, though each member does its own work, to serve the others. This is because we have one baptism, one gospel, one faith, and are all Christians alike;

for baptism, gospel and faith these alone make spiritual and Christian people.”⁴ This generalized idea of the ministry, apart from ordination to specific office in the church, places on every Christian a sacred responsibility to co-operate in the government and administration of the church; it also places on every Christian the responsibility of being useful to his fellow man according to his special gift.⁵ A minister in this sense is, then, one who is obligated as a Christian to serve Christ by showing love, not only to his neighbor within the church, but also in the world at large whenever the opportunity arises. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, it was the lawyer who sought to justify his narrow view of religious obligation by asking “Who is my neighbor?”, thus making his responsibilities under God center about himself and those he sought to define as neighbor.⁶ But in the final analysis Jesus turns the question around placing the responsibility on the lawyer and his obligations to his fellow man; *i.e.*, “to whom am I a neighbor?”⁷

This wider concept of a Christian as a minister to his neighbor reappeared again as an emphasis at the time of the Protestant Reformation. This was particularly true in writings that treated Christian vocation. It was a natural result of the abolishment of the medieval Catholic distinction between special religious merit and dignity attached to the role of the clergy, and the inferior—though altogether necessary—function of ordinary lay Christians in the world. The Reformers taught that all vocations rank the same with God. None are more sacred, or more secular than others, no matter how they are esteemed by men. While it was admitted that some vocations are socially more influential than others because of leadership positions, the difference between monk or magistrate and taylor or garbage collector is an “official” distinction only, implying no real difference in merit or dignity before God. Therefore, no individual, whatever his work may be, has any necessity for forsaking the responsibilities of his Christian ministry in that work to go off on a crusade or to enter a monastery out of bad conscience about what he is now doing and under the illusion that he can be more Christian in his activities somewhere else. John Calvin in writing on the Christian as minister in regard to vocation declared, “The Lord commands every one of us, in all the actions of life to regard his vocation . . . He has appointed to all their particular duties in different spheres of life . . . Every individual’s line of life . . . is, as it were, a post assigned him by the

Lord, that he may not wander about in uncertainty all his days.”⁸ It is significant, therefore, that the early stages of the Reformation expressed a clear understanding of the place and responsibility of the average Christian.

A return to a study of the Primitive Church by the Reformers lead to a wholesome attitude of the concept of ministry. It was stressed that originally in the New Testament the term “laity” meant all of the people in the early Christian ministry; however, by the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the Protestant church began to stress a professionalized ministry through ordination. It is significant that during this same period evangelical Pietism arose within the structures of the reformation churches. This movement insisted on a return to the concept of every Christian as a minister as taught in the New Testament and emphasized by the early Reformers. Evangelical Pietism sought to restore the idea of “office” in regard to the ordained ministry in contrast to the medieval concept of “merit.” Unfortunately, the latter assumption won out and the rift widened so much so that even today the ordinary church member in most denominations seems still to miss the important fact that the nonministering Christian was non-existent in the early Christian movement.⁹

Attempts are now being made by many Christian movements to recover the idea of the Christian as a minister in all walks of life. The enthusiasm with which some successful attempts at its recovery have been received indicate the distance which Christianity has travelled from the idea of the ministering Christian apparent in the records of the Primitive Church.¹⁰ This assumption of the functions, which belong to the body of Christ as a whole, by the ordained minister has led historically to a two fold detriment of the lay ministry movement in the Christian church. In the first place, it tends to paralyze the activity of the ordinary members of the church, impeding their spiritual growth. Secondly, when the concept of lay ministry is restored in some form, it is overshadowed by our cultural concept of professional ministry. In this latter case many of the lay ministers tend to abandon the advantages of their lay vocation and status, either by joining the ranks of the paid servants of the church or by assimilating, perhaps unconsciously, the manners and traditions of the professional ministry. This naturally kills creative imagination and often leads to inert stereotypes.¹¹

This raises the question of relationships. What is to be the function of the "ordained" minister in regard to the lay minister? How is the ordained minister to view the goal of his ministry in relation to the lay Christian in the Church? Certainly it can be asserted in view of what has been said that one of the major functions of the ordained minister must be to discourage the traditional lay view of the ministry as belonging totally to the ordained clergyman, i.e., "let the preacher do it." This idea arising out of the clericalism of the past afflicted almost all congregations and has been a betrayal of the basic meaning of the Christian ministry. Therefore, it is not surprising that far too many Christians do not see themselves as duty bound to a role of Christian "ministry."¹²

Many young people who might have been challenged to more meaningful lives of Christian ministries see little or no association between what they are doing or preparing to do in life and a call to be committed to the Christian ministry. What is needed is a greater emphasis on the Christian as a responsible minister in the world. Many young people need to be encouraged to serve Christ through the community by envisioning their ministry in terms of daily occupation. Certainly it can be pointed out that there are always more opportunities of giving effective service in one's career than would be likely to come if one were in the full-time service of a local church preoccupied with worship or "services." Thus there is obviously a need of a flexible strategy within the Christian camp as we face a world of rapid change. Without doubt, the concept of the ministry in the world on the part of every Christian must be stressed if the witness of Christianity is to be effective as the "light of the world" and the "salt of the earth." However, in the light of what has just been said, realism suggests that a professional clergy serving a neighborhood through its local church remains indispensable.

The fact that there is a large number of able and sincere ordained men fulfilling their functions as pastors is one of the most hopeful factors in our present situation. If we can add to them increasing numbers of Christians who see all of life as a Christian vocation, our time may be one that contributes to future accomplishment and hope. The role of the ordained minister, in strengthening the generalized concept of the lay minister, will be successful only insofar as he can help to inspire the Christian laity to make religious life creative in service to God and neighbor. In this way the Christian community can

purge itself of the idolatry of individualism and return to the primitive concept of the witnessing community. Gibbon in tracing the root cause of the rapid spread of Christianity in the hostile environment of the Roman Empire declares it to be the contagious ministry of all the Christians. He places primary emphasis on the fact that "it became the most sacred duty of a new convert to diffuse among his friends and relations the inestimable blessing which he had received."¹³ John R. Mott in referring to the general effectiveness of one's consciousness of his ministry in the early church wrote, "Wherever the Christian disciples scattered, the evidences multiplied of Christianity as a leaven working quietly for the conversion of one household after another. It is this commending by life and word the reality and wonder-working of the Living Lord on the part of the rank and file of His disciples within the sphere of their daily calling that best explains the penetration of Roman society with the world conquering Gospel."¹⁴

It is this generalized concept of the ministry that must be recovered through stressing the "cooperative ministry" of the church, i.e., both professional ministers and non-professional ministers as Christians working towards a goal of greater involvement in the affairs of the twentieth century. The major success of Christianity in the first century arose from the influence of a cooperative ministry within the church confronting the world.¹⁵ A great part of our failure as twentieth century Christians has been to allow the sharing idea of the ministry giving rise to the witnessing community, to be dormant when the need has been apparent. Our downfall at this point has been to allow the Christian community to assume that it is a structure where few speak and the many simply listen. The result of this posture has been that the primary Christian observance of most people is that of listening to sermons or lessons with very little strategy to "go and do likewise."

Further, we must overcome the twentieth century idea of "laissez faire" Christianity. While the Christian experience must begin with the individual it is by no means saying that it is individualistic. "Laissez faire" doctrine producing individualism is one of the most subtle illusions than can invade the Christian community. It pictures man as not only the one who must decide moral issues on his own, but also as the source of the criteria by which all ideas of Christian "ministries" are to be judged. Contrasted with this doctrine of individualism is the other subtle

illusion that affects the ministry of the Christian within the church, viz. "collectivism." This illusion subordinates the individual to the group in such a way as to make him important only for the sake of the group. Some groups within the Christian camp operating under this illusion stress their differences from other Christians to such an extent that any Christian ministry involving another group is looked upon as betrayal. The evil results of both these illusions have been manifest in Christian history.

In contrast to both these illusions, the idea of a Christian "cooperative ministry" abandons the false dichotomy of the individual and the group, generated by strict clericalism in favor of an organismic understanding of the Christian community. The individual Christian acting in the general sense of the term "minister" relates to the rest of the individuals in the group, each carrying on his particular ministry, but at the same time inescapably interdependent one part on the other. Moreover, just as a living organism is more than the sum of its parts, so a group of persons is more than the sum of the individuals who constitute it. Paul makes clear use of the organic image of a cooperative ministry in Romans chapter twelve where he describes the church as the "body of Christ." It is in this sense that the task of each member according to his ability, is to use his talents to promote the reconciliation of divergent elements within human personality and among human beings. In this sense each member of the Christian community is expressing a corporate Christian ministry.¹⁶ Furthermore, in this same sense, the Christian as a minister in the general sense must be inspired to see his task as similar to that which Jesus was fulfilling, i.e., to reconcile the world to God.¹⁷ It is in this sense of a "sharing ministry" within and without the local church that Francis Schaeffer calls for a compassionate Christianity that is truly universal, relevant to all segments of society and all societies of the world. He writes, "The early Christian church cut across all lines which divided men—Jew and Greek, Greek and barbarian, male and female; . . . The observable and practical love in our days certainly should also without reservation cut across all such lines as language, nationalities, national frontiers, younger or older, colors of skin, education and economic levels . . . cultural differentiation, and the more traditional and less traditional forms of worship."¹⁸

What is implicit in the foregoing discussion should now be stated explicitly. First, if the Christian "ministry" as witness is to meet the challenge of the crisis of our time, there must be a greater emphasis placed on the generalized concept of every Christian as a minister according to his capabilities in and outside the Christian community. This involves getting the Christian to see his total life as sharing in the great ministry of reconciliation as set forth in the New Testament. Secondly, the generalized concept of the ministry must not be understood as a denial of a place for professional training for the ministry. Without competent evangelical leadership the generalized concept of the ministry would soon degenerate into sectarianism and all the evils associated with it. The major role of the trained minister in the latter part of this twentieth century must be to see that the Gospel is expressed primarily through the medium of discipleship as expressed in lay ministries. This means that there must be a return to the emphasis on Christian vocation as expressed by the major leaders in the Reformation. In the third place, each Christian congregation must return to the concept of the "cooperative ministry" as set forth by Paul in his writings on the Church.¹⁹ The idea of total responsibility for the Christian community residing in the pastor or trained ministry must be scrapped. Without each Christian engaged in some form of ministry for the upbuilding of his fellow-Christian, whether trained clergy or layman, the whole corporate witness of the church is tragically weakened. In the fourth place, the whole idea of Christian service must be understood in terms of opportunity when it arises. No segment of life, secular or sacred, must be viewed as of higher priority than any other. All barriers erected by man and his self-centered institutions must be surmounted when in the name of religion they seek to inhibit the practice of Christian love through various Christian ministries. Thus Christians are bound by Jesus' example, as set forth in the Gospels, of sticking as close as possible to human need in their ministries. This gives us no opportunity for confining the Christian ministry to professionals. It is only in this type of freedom from self-centered traditions, that new and imaginative forms of Christian ministries, under the Spirit, can arise within the context of each situation. Who is a minister? The Christian who is at hand when an opportunity arises, be he professional or lay-Christian. He is one who has come to realize that in the ministry of reconciliation through vocation, human need and

man-made regulations are never to be compared except to the infinite advantage of the former.

¹ Niebuhr and Williams, *The Ministry in Historical Perspective* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1956), p. 4.

² Cf. Jn. 12:26; Lk. 22:24; Mt. 22:13; 23:11; Mk. 9:35; *et. el.*

³ Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1910, second ed.), VII, pp. 24-6.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁵ Cf. Rom. 12:5-21; Eph. 4:8-13.

⁶ The lawyer's question seeks to explain the meaning of neighbor as object of one's love; however, the emphasis of the story is not on the man who fell among robbers, but on the Samaritan who showed practical mercy to him. It illustrates neighbor as subject engaged in ministry, rather than object receiving ministration. Cf. B.T.D. Smith, *The Parables of the Synoptic Gospels* (Cambridge: University Press, 1937), p. 182.

⁷ Soren Kierkegaard, *Works of Love* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946), p. 19.

⁸ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Translated from the Latin by John Allen (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1949), III, x, 6, p. 790.

⁹ Cf. the classic work on this subject by Bishop J. B. Lightfoot, *On the Christian Ministry* (London: Macmillan and Company, Ltd. 1878). This important work is bound with Lightfoot's commentary on the *Epistle to the Philippians*. "The only priests under the Gospel," he writes, "designated as such in the New Testament, are the saints, the members of the Christian brotherhood."

¹⁰ Cf. *Man's Disorder And God's Design*, The Amsterdam Assembly Series, "The Church's Witness to God's Design" (New York: Harper and Brothers, n.d.), II, pp. 118-20.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² John R. Mott, *Liberating the Lay Forces of Christianity* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1932), p. 84.

¹³ Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (London: Methuen and Company, 1896), II, p. 7.

¹⁴ John R. Mott, *Op. Cit.*, p. 2f.

¹⁵ Cf. Rom., 12:3-21.

¹⁶ Louis W. Hodges and Harmon L. Smith, *The Christian and His Decisions* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1969), pp. 20-22.

¹⁷ Cf. II Cor., 5:19.

¹⁸ Francis A. Schaeffer, *The Church at the End of the Twentieth Century* (Downer's Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1970), pp. 105-6.

¹⁹ Cf. Rom. 12 and 14.

APPROACHES TO MINISTRY . . .

Articles on a Theme

MINISTERING TO MOBILE PEOPLE

CHARLES R. MUNSON

Consider these headlines:

Camping fever strikes millions

There may be a camper in your future

Campers put gals in trucker's seat

The Gospel goes to the marketplace

Four-day work week seen on way for U.S. labor

New concept—7 days work 7 days off

These headlines can not be ignored by the twentieth century church for they illustrate what the church is facing—either in gloom or in opportunity.

Sylvia Porter, the well-known economist, says the shape of the future is to a four-day 30-hour week, or a four-day 40-hour work week. While the beginnings in these areas are small the trend is abundantly clear. Still a new venture is working with success, a seven day 70-hour work week with seven days vacation following. Workers are pleased with it because it gives more time with the family and more time to travel. Add to these ideas the new long week end vacations. This year many will get at least seven or eight long weekends. Americans are getting more and more time to travel and they are doing it.

There are approximately 45 million family campers in America, or about 18 million families, a typical family spending \$25 to \$30 dollars a day on the go. Last year \$989 million dollars were spent by Americans for recreational vehicles such as travel trailers, tent trailers, truck campers and other motorized shel-

ters. There are about 2.5 million of such vehicles registered with 80 per cent of them travel trailers costing on the average—\$2,467. In addition approximately 700,000 tents were sold annually costing about \$70 million dollars.

These travelers are primarily dwellers of the suburbs, small cities and towns who own their homes and about 50% of them own two or more cars. They traveled to some 587,342 campsites in the U.S. and 92,699 campsites in Canada and to many more unregistered sites.

What does all of this mean to the church? Think about these true illustrations: John approaches his pastor in April and says pastor, "Please do not get excited but I'll not likely see you again until November; we are going to be in our travel trailer over the weekends until then." Take another example. Jim and Jill leave home immediately after work on Friday and travel some 25 or 30 miles to a trailer where they stay until late Sunday evening, getting back home just in time for bed. They live each week for the weekend away from the city. These people in the illustrations are not at all unreligious or lacking in spiritual depth; they simply are part of the growing interest in travel and camping. Obviously there are many who are part of the mobile society who are unspiritual but many are not. The point is—both classes of people must be ministered to and the opportunities are many.

Currently two attitudes prevail among church leaders—at the most three. The first attitude is to lament the fact that these people are not in church discharging their Christian responsibilities. Admittedly people on the move do create leadership problems in the church. But lamenting will not cause them to sell their recreational equipment nor will it cause them to return to the "home" church for worship. The second attitude is one of growing awareness to the phenomenon. These are leaders who are just becoming aware of the fact that it is not possible to begin a church school year with a rally day in September, for example, because people are traveling and camping late into the fall and even into the winter. These leaders are coming to understand that they are not going to change the trend toward mobility and are beginning to think realistically about the options. The third group of leaders have faced the facts and have begun to provide worship services where the people are and in such a manner that people can attend freely.

The leadership of the church must not allow itself to take the first position. Rather than lamenting over its mobile people

THE WORKMAN LECTURES

THE CHRISTIAN FAITH to its INTELLECTUAL DESPISERS

by

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under the sponsorship of the Elwood and Sarah Workman Missions Foundation through a gift providing an annual course of study in Christian Missions. This series of lectures by Dr. Nygren seeks to articulate the relevancy of the Christian faith as it confronts contemporary philosophical systems.

The lectures are here made available to the Ashland Theological Seminary constituency for stimulation regarding the Christian faith and challenge to reflection regarding its reasonability in the contemporary intellectual climate.

Positivism — The Epistemological Challenge

THE INVESTIGATION into the origin and the nature of knowledge has its roots in the earliest writings of the ancient philosophers of Greece. The epistemological controversy between empiricism, always pointing to sense perception as the origin of ideas, and rationalism, always insisting that the mind contributes ideas not derived from sensory experience, can be traced at least as far back as the Grecian Academy six centuries before Christ. Plato taught that reason can attain to the immutable, that the ideas of men are related to actually existing ideas which ultimately were not material or dependent upon sensory perception. Rene Descartes was later to comment: "I was delighted with mathematics because of the certainty of its demonstration and the evidence of its *reasoning*."¹ He concluded that whatever else one can doubt, one cannot doubt his process of doubt.

Empiricism, on the other hand, had its roots more firmly fixed in the Aristotelian emphasis upon the sensory perception of the singular datum, rather than upon the universal idea. One can go back even prior to Aristotle and find in the writings of Democritus (5th century B.C.) a teaching that ultimate reality is to be found in one's sense experience. This reality, he taught, consisted of atoms moving in all directions in a void. These atoms, in turn, were believed irreducible, indivisible, and quantitatively characterized. They were neither created nor could they be destroyed. Two centuries later, Epicurus was to adopt and expand that Democritean cosmology of infinite atoms in an infinite void. He was convinced that the universe was not from nothing, but was at all times a transfer of pre-existing material. Man was construed to be just another product of natural sources with life simply the span bounded by birth and death.

This method for the attainment of knowledge reached a climax in the writings of David Hume, who radicalized sensory experience as the one source of human awareness. He insisted that the origin of all ideas was in sense perception. The mind, he was forced to conclude, was no more than a collection of perceptions. Auguste Comte, the nineteenth century writer of *Positive Philosophy*, was to systematize the implications of empiricism. He felt that he must reject all prior philosophy. He envisioned men passing through three stages: theological, metaphysical, and scientific. These he analogized by calling them respectively childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. In the theological stage, man explained the unknown as acts of fictitious beings, whose existence could not be confirmed. In the metaphysical stage, personalized agencies were abandoned in favor of essences, substances, *a priori*s. At his time, Comte boasted, the phenomena of experiences could be accepted as positive data. The scientific stage was at hand.

Epistemology, then, is the study and the analysis of man's attempt to come to grips with reality, of his striving to reach the point in his intellectual development when he can say, with reasonable confidence, "I know;" "I am convinced;" "I believe."

With this in mind, let us turn our attention to the Fourth Gospel. The writer had come to the firm conclusion that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. His purpose for recording the life and the teachings of Jesus was to persuade his readers to believe in Him also. Therefore, he readily admits his selectivity in the inclusion of material about Jesus. "Now Jesus did many other signs...which are not written in this book; but *these* are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ..."²

On the basis of these words, it seems a justifiable hypothesis to assume that John intentionally selected his data because of their potential convincing power over his readers. Why then did he include the story found in chapter nine? One needs to search for the epistemological reasons for its inclusion.

We read that Jesus and his disciples pass a man who, according to the prior awareness of the disciples, had been blind since his birth. They attempt

to engage Jesus in a theological discourse concerning the reason for his blindness. Convinced, as had been Job of old and his three friends, that all human suffering must be the result of sin, the disciples ask whether the man is being punished for his parents' sins or perchance for some antenatal sin of which he himself might have been guilty. In his response, Jesus rejects their theorizing that sin on the part of anyone was the cause of man's blindness.³ Moreover, he is unwilling to be engaged in lengthy debate, but turns immediately to the blind man. He makes clay out of spittle and dirt, places it upon the man's eyes, and says to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam." Upon his return from the pool, the man's eyes possess the power of perception.

This phenomenon led to an investigation by a group of the religious leaders of the day. Those who first attempted to evaluate the situation apparently had no hesitance in accepting the evidence that there indeed was a man who had been blind but now stood before them with eyes open to the light of the sun. It would seem that they were ready and willing to accept the testimony given by the man as indicative of some sort of a miraculous performance. A strange and mighty work had transpired in their midst. How was it to be explained?

The leaders of this group began to reflect upon the teachings of Judaism which might be applied to this situation. In Judaism a miracle could be construed as an event in which one *could* discern the revelation of God. That norm of all Jewish religion, the Pentateuch, suggested that the miraculous was to be considered a sign or a wonder from God. But the Jews also saw in the miracle the possibility of outward evidence of the practice of magic and sorcery under the inspiration of strange and foreign divinities antagonistic to Yahweh. To the Jews magic in any form was forbidden; its practitioners were put to death. The Scriptures associated sorcerers with the perverters of religion who practiced human sacrifice.

This group of investigators also noted the fact that the miracle had occurred on the Sabbath; therefore, they reasoned, the performer of the miracle could not have come from God, or he would not have violated the law of the Sabbath. This man must be a sorcerer.

This first group of investigators into the phenomenon was the counterpart of the epistemological rationalist. In the words of Gerhard Szczesny they were convinced that "only...rationally grounded intellectuality is able to find a secure point of departure for ventures in the...unknown."⁴ The truth of the matter was that the investigation of these "rationalists" was not open-minded or free from prejudice. Reinhold Niebuhr well describes the weakness of such a position: "A careful scrutiny of the processes by which we arrive at this conclusion must lead to the conviction that the presupposition... was subtly involved in the reason by which we arrived at the conclusion."⁵ Again, in the words of Michael Novak, "It is a mistake to think that...any...view of life is a conclusion to philosophic reasoning; it is rather a horizon already determined by the starting place, the point at which one had decided...to begin."⁶

The rationalism of these investigators began with the presupposition that a Sabbath violation (as defined by themselves) was antagonistic to the worship of Yahweh. Having observed that Jesus violated the Sabbath, they concluded that he must have been inspired and empowered not by Yahweh but by demons and was, in fact, a practitioner of sorcery deserving death.

Behind their reasoning was their conception of religion as an inheritance to be preserved, an inheritance of ceremony, ritual and dogma. To deviate even a little as a result of some new disclosure would have been to them as unthinkable as trying to change one's ancestry. On the ground of their speculation they were denying the possibility that God had in reality come in flesh. It was John Calvin who observed: "The restoration of sight to the blind man ought undoubtedly to have softened even the hearts of stone; or, at least, the Pharisees ought to have been struck with the novelty and greatness of the miracle, so as to remain in doubt...until they inquired if it were a divine work..."⁷ The author of the Fourth

Gospel is implying that rationalism as a means for the discovery of truth does not always lead to belief in Jesus, for the one using that method is guilty of assuming hypotheses which bias his thinking.

The text continues by suggesting that another investigation was conducted by the Religious Leaders. It appears that these investigations were skeptical about the truth of the whole incident. They refused to believe that a miracle had in fact occurred. David Hume wrote: "All probability, then, supposes an opposition of experiments and observations, where the one side is found the overbalance the other..." So—"no testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle, unless the testimony be of such a kind, that *its* falsehoods would be more miraculous than the fact, which it endeavors to establish." Since a "miracle is a violation of the laws of nature; and as a firm and unalterable experience has established these laws, the proof against a miracle, from the very nature of the fact, is as entire as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined."⁸

These religious investigators doubted that the man had really been blind. They suspected rather that a ruse was being perpetrated at their expense, that fraud or collusion was obviously present in the whole incident. These men, John would suggest, illustrate the empirically oriented. They insist that blind men don't see; the man standing before them is obviously in possession of his sight; therefore he must be guilty, along with Jesus, of perpetrating a plot to make them, the Pharisees, look foolish before the people.

The twentieth century has marked the development of logical positivism and its daughter linguistic analysis. When logical positivism moves upon the scene, one sees the attempt to secularize Christianity, as the value of a religious affirmation is not conceptually significant. It is functionally significant if it is therapeutic, meeting a psychological need. Religious affirmations are said not to be true, only helpful, for affirmations about the supernatural are not verifiable.

The positivistic position goes like this:

All cognitively meaningful language is either definitional or empirical in nature; no religious language is either definitional or empirical in nature; no religious language is cognitively meaningful. Such "methodological assumptions constitute an unnecessarily thick smoke screen," writes Geddes McGregor.⁹

According to the author of the Gospel, like their rationalist counterparts, these investigators based their observations not upon the evidence alone but upon a prior commitment to an underlying metaphysical assumption along with an epistemological standpoint which was simply incompatible with the acceptance of the possibility that men born blind might gain their sight. Their hypothesis would have been: A miracle like that just does not happen, for never have we been confronted by one which was verifiable. "There is a certain arbitrariness about the criterion," suggests McGregor.¹⁰ The empiricist simply ruled out the possibility of any occurrence which could not be explained through sensory perception. They forgot that man cannot come to new knowledge unless he is willing to declare his preference for accuracy as opposed to personal interest in the outcome of the investigation. As an historian or a scientist per se one does not know if the presence of the supernatural might be just such a new factor in the situation as might make an alteration not unacceptable but actually acceptable. As C. S. Lewis often suggested: Natural Law is true only when one considers "Nature uninterrupted."¹¹

In passing, one might mention Rudolf Bultmann who has been concerned with the miraculous. He has classified the supernatural as mythological. He has taught that the Biblical accounts of the supernatural do not give objective truth about God, but promote our self-understanding. This conclusion leads to a minimizing of the importance of the historical aspects of the life of Jesus. Bultmann emphasizes the Apostolic preaching and seems to make of little importance certain events, e.g. the resurrection. What matters, according to his view, is that this was a meaningful message proclaimed by the church.

Edwin Lewis, some years ago in his *Philosophy of Revelation*, put it thus: To say that we will not accept until we have been made certain is as though a man in danger of drowning should refuse to grasp a rope thrown to him until he was assured it would bear his weight. He can prove the adequacy of the rope only by trusting himself to it."¹²

John Hick has described the dilemma of the empiricist: "...the ways in which we act and react within the circle of our immediate experiences depend upon our beliefs as to what lies beyond that circle. The emotional tone and color of our consciousness is finally determined by the basic 'ground plan' of our system of beliefs."¹³ Michael Novak further pinpoints the empirical weakness: "It is the knower who decided what he accepts..."¹⁴ It is like the story told of the psychiatrist who was confronted by a patient who was convinced that he was dead. Nothing the psychiatrist could say would alter the man's opinion of his state. The psychiatrist, seemingly in a burst of inspiration, turned to the man and asked, "Tell me, do dead men bleed?" "No!" responded the patient quickly. Suddenly the psychiatrist took hold of the patient's finger and pricked it with a pin. After recovering from the initial shock, the patient held his finger, watched it closely, and finally declared: "Well, what do you know, dead men bleed!"

The first century "empiricist" refused to accept the possibility that a miracle had in fact occurred. He joined his "rationalist" counterpart, and they cast out of their presence the man in question. Their slogan seems to have been: When in doubt, the best thing one can do is to destroy the evidence, thus avoiding clutter in the stage of inquiry. Or as a humorous anecdote puts it: "Don't bother me with the facts; my mind's already made up."

Plato once commented that only if a teacher should be sent to him from the gods could he hope to reach beyond where his mind at last must stop.

The Christian claim is that this wider knowledge has been disclosed in Jesus of Nazareth. The Christian Faith declares that there is more to existence than the correlations of the senses; there is more to truth than reason can comprehend. Alfred North Whitehead was to muse that when one understands all about the sun and all about the atmosphere and all about the rotation of the earth, one may still miss the radiance of the sunset.

David Cairns wrote: "Assuredly, the assumption that the whole vast natural universe must be 'orderly' is seen to be an adventure of singular audacity when we think of the tiny little 'home-form of earth' which is our abode, and the enormous universe of which it is an infinitesimal fraction."¹⁵

The Fourth Evangelist then tells the reader that Jesus came upon the man and asked him: "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" He answered, "And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?" Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and it is he who speaks to you." He said, "Lord, I believe."

It becomes necessary now to return to the first encounter Jesus had with that man. It must be recalled that he had been blind from birth. Thus, visual perception of Jesus prior to that moment had not occurred. Moreover, there is no indication given in the text to indicate that he had *any* prior experience with Jesus before that singular confrontation involving the placing of clay on his eyes and speaking the strange words, "Go, wash." John seems to be saying: Had this man been inclined to the epistemological position of the rationalist, he would have demanded a full-fledged explanation of the reasons why these strange things were happening. Had he done so, he would have become quite convinced that it was foolishness.

On the other hand, had this man been a thorough-going empiricist, he would have immediately considered the words of Jesus as meaningless, for never before had anyone heard of a man born blind having been given his sight. He would have insisted that there was no prior evidence to justify his responding to Jesus' words. This was not the case. He first believed Jesus, and then came back seeing. "I see nothing arrogant in the notion," penned Geddes McGregor, "that God might permit a man to discern him."¹⁶ The investigating Pharisees *saw* the man but refused to believe. The author of the Gospel is saying that there is a way to knowledge other than the

way of rational procedure or empirical evidence. E. L. Mascall has suggested that *intelligibility* and not *verifiability* ought to be the base for knowledge, otherwise logic itself would not be demonstrable. He has suggested that the intellect not only reasons but also apprehends. One can discover; one can deduce; but one can also have truth disclosed to him. John Baillie has expressed it thus: When we say, "I know" we also say, "I am certain." Is this certainty based upon epistemological evidence or rational analysis the only certainty one has? This illustration was used by John Baillie: I *know* that an object was made by a particular manufacturer; I *believe* that the giver of the gift acquired it honestly; I have *equal certainty* in both instances. The certainty of the Christian faith is more like the latter; to believe means to put faith in, and from this faith there comes immediate certainty.¹⁷

Contemporary relevance may be directed to modern man's infatuation with the methodology of science. As a result of the discoveries of science, man has been exposed to many things which he cannot understand—the galaxies of the heavens and the millions of light years separating man from the distant stars, the potential powers of the sub-microscopic electrons, the strange mutations in altering life on his own planet. The advances made in the fields of scientific endeavor have held modern man in awe. In such an age there has been the tendency to imply that the methods of science are the only valid means for the discovery of truth. This view, by its very definition, excludes that which cannot be brought to the test of empirical verification. Exclusive emphasis upon scientific methodology has constructed a world of selected phenomena. The success of the scientist, writes Jacques Barzun, "blinds him and others to the fact that he began by assuming the conclusion which he now presents as having been found and demonstrated."

Several other sentences from Barzun's writings are suggestive at this point:

No scientist could survive half an hour outside his laboratory if he tried to apply his habitual tests to his common experience—analyzing, measuring, questioning such things as his neighbor's truthfulness, his tradesmen's honesty, his wife's fidelity. A man's relation with his family and friends would come to an abrupt end, his private pleasure would be destroyed, if he were even for a moment scientific about them.¹⁸

Karl Heim in his many writings has pointed out a basic flaw in the methodology of natural investigation. He says that it attempts to separate the object under investigation from the investigating subject. This, he argues, one cannot do and still have a thorough analysis of the situation. "When we leave out the subject," he has written, "we have not given a complete description of the state of affairs."¹⁹

He also says:

As soon as I have discovered this new space, I knew from the very first moment that this space has not just come into being in the hour in which it has been disclosed to me. I know, on the contrary, . . . that I have always been in it, but that I have been living like a blind man who gropes his way along with a stick, in the midst of a heavenly landscape which is suffused with radiant sunshine, because he does not see . . . Yet I know, from the very moment at which my eyes are opening to a new space, not only that I myself was always encompassed by this space, although I had hitherto been unaware of it, but also that all my fellow men, who are still stricken with blindness and, who therefore regard me as a visionary, are themselves standing in this space, just as I am, but that their eyes are still closed.²⁰

Thus it was with the writer of the Fourth Gospel. There are times when "Believing is Seeing." For the blind man, belief in the words of Jesus led to his "coming back seeing." The epistemological implication is that

at least on occasion, an experience of the heart may be brought about by revelation responded to by faith. Not to know God, not to know Jesus as the Christ, is a failure, not of the intellect, but of the heart.

This method had its roots firmly implanted in the Sacred Scriptures of the Jews. Jeremiah, using the language of the prophetic spokesman for God, declared: "...I will make them *know*...my power and my might, and they shall *know* that my name is the Lord."²¹ Likewise, Ezekiel said, "...they shall know my vengeance, says the Lord."²² In a plaintive cry of sorrow at the lack of knowledge about God, Isaiah spoke these words:

The ox knows its owner,
and the ass its master's crib;
but Israel does not know,
my people does not understand.²³

One knows God by experiencing Him and by recognizing that He is the doer of all things.

To return to the account in the Fourth Gospel. The author used the Greek term *pistis* which has the general meaning of "to be persuaded of." It has, however, a further religious reference, namely, "the conviction and trust to which a man is impelled by a certain inner and high prerogative and law of his soul."²⁴ It is further suggestive that in the phraseology used in Jesus' questioning of the man in their second confrontation we read *pisteueis eis*. Moulton calls attention to the fact that there is a distinction, though perhaps slight, between the use of the verb with the simple dative and with the preposition *eis*. Such a usage, Moulton has suggested, "recalls...the bringing of the *soul into* that mystical vision."²⁵

When the man born blind was confronted by Jesus, he had an experience of the heart which convinced him that there indeed was power, revelation from beyond. Why was this incident in the Fourth Gospel? It depicts a man who believed, without having seen. An inner confrontation caused him to believe. "Thus," writes John Hick, "the primary religious perception...is an apprehension of the divine presence within the believer's human experience."²⁶ Or in the words of Oscar Cullman, "A faith derived from things seen and nothing more is not true faith."²⁷

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Existentialism — The Anthropological Challenge

A DIFFICULT WORD to pronounce or to spell, existentialism is even more difficult to define.¹ This is true because there is a decided absence of any absolute system of thought held by those who wish to be classified as existentialists. In fact, the whole existential movement has been one against system. In a sense, to define is to destroy. Over a period of several years this word has occasionally been associated with the "bearded Bohemian" with unkempt clothes, with the long-haired cafe singer plunking on an old guitar, with the "beatnik" poet reading his esoteric creations to coffee-drinking listeners. Existentialism has also been associated with an atheistic movement centered in France, propelled by a brilliant one-time resistance-fighter turned essayist and dramatist, John Paul Sartre. Existentialism has further been associated with an attempt on the part of certain contemporary theologians to remake the Christian faith in terms of the culture in which we are now living.

As a distinguishable movement, existentialism can be seen as emerging from the life and the writings of the melancholy Danish gad-fly, Soren Kierkegaard. With some amazing flashes of insight, he jibed and cajoled the church and the society of his day until his contemporaries resented him bitterly. It is just his pungent criticism and biting sarcasm which has led many of Kierkegaard's twentieth century disciples to arise and call him blessed. Existentialism is, in actuality, perhaps more a movement and an attitude than a system of thought and as such cannot be reduced to a set of tenets. It is a life of continuous questioning. Yet there are several characteristics which seem to be indicative of this expression of life. One general feature is an emphasis upon the individual and a hostility to all systems of thought. Existentialism seeks to exalt the personality and the personal experiences of the individual. In fact, it is this primacy of the existing individual that has suggested the name "existentialism." Each man is construed as his own point of intellectual departure. This is in sharp contrast to classical philosophy which tended to begin with abstract thinking. Sartre put it: "... first of all man exists, turns up, appears on the scene, and, only afterwards, defines himself."² For the existentialist, man is primarily what he is or what he is becoming by means of his own action. It is in his own search for truth and meaning that man is caught up and involved.

A second concomitant feature is the emphasis placed upon the absolute freedom of this individual man. It is emphasized that man alone, above all else, is a decision-making creature, blessed, or cursed, with the freedom to choose among a variety of possibilities in an absurd and mysterious existence; to be truly human, man must accept this freedom and conquer the anxiety and despair that threatens him by commitment to a way of life. He recognizes no authority beyond himself—past, present, or future. He repudiates any and all bodies of beliefs as having no validity in his life as he quickly rejects any particular code of morals. For the existentialist, morality is not so much conformity as it is creation. Man does not ask what he *must* do; man chooses what he *wants* to do. It is man himself who gives meaning to his own action. It is existential man's exercise of his freedom which makes his action right. In the *Flies*, Sartre has Orestes say, "Suddenly freedom crashed down upon me and swept me off my feet. Nature sprang back, my youth went with the wind, and I knew myself alone, utterly alone in the midst of this well-meaning little universe.... And there was nothing left in heaven, no right or wrong, nor anyone to give me orders."³ The emphasis is upon what is true for a person in a particular situation.

In reality, then, man produces values. He does not accept them from without himself—regardless of the source. Man *is* not; he is becoming.

That is to say, he is what he is *not*; he is *not* what he is. Thus one can see the nihilistic implications of Sartrean existentialism. One's existence is a striving to become, but a never reaching; it is a striving after an illusion, a search for a phantom; thus life is an encounter with nothingness.

To exist in this absolute freedom means to exist "authentically," to exist as man. According to John Paul Sartre, there is no excuse for one's action to be found in his past; nor is there any justification to be discovered in the future. His only justification for his action is his choice to act. His words are illustrative of existential thinking: "We find no value or commands to turn to which legitimize our conduct."⁴ The earlier words of Gerhardt Lessing, words which influenced the thinking of Soren Kierkegaard, set the same idea before us: "If God held all truth in his right hand, and in his left hand the persistent striving for truth... and should say, 'Choose!' I should humbly bow before his left hand and say, 'Father, give thy gift...'"⁵ All *a priori* principles, all postulates of reason or truth, can thus be discarded.

Perhaps it should be noted that it is the problem of understanding one's freedom that marks a point of sharp differentiation in modern existentialism. The atheistic wing insists that the existing man's freedom can be attained only apart from any illusion of a supernatural God invented by the forgone ages as means of keeping man in bondage. Sartre would agree with Friedrich Nietzsche that to accept God and do *His* will is actually to abandon freedom. It would not be sufficient to say that God *gave* man freedom, for this is implicit essentialism. Freedom demands *self*-determinism. Any belief in God, from the perspective of a Sartre, is detrimental to human nature. It is, as he put it, "bad faith," a refusal to accept the fact of freedom. One who believes in God has fled from his responsibility. Thus, *evil* is not to be taken as estrangement from the living God; it is estrangement from one's self and what one can become.

The religiously oriented wing of existentialism, however, places more emphasis upon the involvement of individual man with the "Ultimate Being" or "God" as indicative of freedom. This "Ultimate Being," for the existentialist, is very often described as the "Depth of our own being," which means that man's subjectivity is central. He finds "Ultimate Being" most meaningful by looking deeply into himself.

Another related generalization of the existential movement is its emphasis upon despair, anxiety, death. There seems to be a prevailing mood of pessimism, a mood which appears to be related to existentialism's understanding of the human situation as one filled with contradictions which cannot be resolved. In the novel, *Nausea*, Sartre has Roquentin muse: to exist is to happen without reason. Everything is purposeless, this garden, this town, and myself.⁶

Existentialism's man, wrote Norman Greene, "must carve a slow and painful path through achievement toward a transcendent perfection which he will never reach."⁷ "Indeed," Sartre has further suggested, for man "everything is permissible if God does not exist, and as a result man is forlorn, because neither within him nor without does he find anything to cling to."⁸ There is no guide! This general mood of despair comes from existentialism's persistent emphasis upon man's corruption and his total incapacity for improvement.

To be sure, Biblical writings antedate the contemporary existentialist movement. Yet, there are certain implications in Scripture which are relevant to this current intellectual mood of the day.

In the writings of the Bible, there is a serious attempt to understand man in his personal existence. At a cursory glance, it might even appear as if the emphasis upon man as the solitary figure who stands condemned as a sinner as a result of Adam's sin and because of his own rebellion against God would give support to existentialism. A careful study, I believe, will refute such a tentative assumption. Let us see man as presented by the Biblical narrative and compare it to the anthropological assumptions made by existentialism.

At the outset, it must be noticed that there is never an exaltation of the human personality as such. Human personality is incomplete apart from its own recognition of relationship to the Divine. The creation narrative distinctly describes man as *dependent* upon his creator. To be created in the image of God is to be contingent, and to be dependent upon that over and beyond.

John Wesley suggested that the Scriptures describe man as being in a "state of sleep." "He is in gross, stupid ignorance of whatever he is most concerned to know."⁹ In man's natural state it is not possible for man to know anything, especially himself. For this reason a Biblical consideration of man cannot be primarily a purely subjective study. Rather, it must be an awareness of the fact that man is what he is because God said, "Let us make man in our image." Yes, man is a solitary creature, but his solitariness is meaningless apart from a relation to his creator. Biblically, the proper understanding of man begins with an understanding of his relationship to God, for apart from God man is nothing, accomplishes nothing, and arrives at nothing.

Paul Scherer puts it: "For 400 years and more, ever since the dawn of modern history in the Renaissance, man has struggled to know himself as man—it is almost impossible to assess the gains that have come by way of that struggle—only to have such catastrophe overtake him at last as would seem once and for all to underscore the fact that he cannot even know himself as man unless he knows himself under God. Where there is no God, there is no man."¹⁰

Dr. Mack B. Stokes, in addressing himself to existentialism's emphasis upon man's subjective existence said: The nontheistic existentialist is "like a man trying to make his way upstream on a worm-eaten, water-logged raft. . . . As he paddles the clumsy craft, his face is set against the currents and the wind. No matter how much he struggles, he makes no headway."¹¹

If one were to attempt to begin with man's subjectivity, one could not really do so, for apart from God man cannot understand who or what he really is. Words of Wesley may again be used in referring to Biblical man: "What a fool, what a blockhead, what a madman is he that forgets the very end of his creation."¹² Full self-realization is not possible apart from God. In fact, there can be no *self*-realization; there can be, in reality, only the realization that one was made like God and needs to have that image restored. Man does not find himself until he finds God.

This means, then, that since one is not able to begin in his own subjectivity, he needs another fulcrum. This point of departure must be the historic Jesus of Nazareth. Without the Christ of history any existential brooding or subjective analysis would be a futile venture, devoid of meaning. Jesus was God's entry upon the stage of human history, "veiled in flesh."

Matthew's Gospel records a series of some ten miracles. Every conceivable type of human malady is represented; every conceivable type of person is represented. In each instance, Jesus entered upon an apparently hopeless situation and life once again took on meaning. In the midst of that series one miracle in particular stands out. It is the one describing the bringing of the paralytic to Jesus by the friends who were forced to pry open the roof in order to gain admission for their friend. Presumably, the paralytic's reason for wanting to be brought to Jesus was that he might be healed. Strange, was it not? Jesus did not heal him at once as he had others. Instead, he said: "My son, your sins are forgiven." This gave rise, to a discussion between some of the observers who, in effect, said: Who does He think He is, God? Only God can forgive sin. Jesus then made the comment: Which is easier to say. Your sins are forgiven, or to say Rise and walk? He turned to the man and said, Rise take your bed and walk." I have a suspicion that what Jesus was saying to the man was: What are you doing lying there? Go home. In effect, the forgiveness of his sins was what that man really needed, although he had thought that it was a physical malady which had enslaved him.

That is to say: He knew his "real" self only after contact with Jesus.

Contemporary existentialism suggests that man's importance is his being, his existence here and now. This being true, it follows that man's religious life, what he experiences, is not necessarily related to the historical career of Jesus. Thus it is that for many subjectively inclined existentialists the Gospel record was written to present not so much the life of Jesus as to reveal the experiences of his followers. With such an understanding of the New Testament record, who Jesus was must be forever shrouded by the pall of the unknown and the unknowable. Many existentially-oriented theologians suggest that to speak of Jesus with any degree of historic certainty or demonstrable reality is totally irrelevant to contemporary man, for what happens to us "religiously" may very well happen apart from Jesus by virtue of God's perpetual saving concern which is merely illustrated in Jesus.

Existentialism emphasizes the confrontation of an individual in his subjectivity with "The Biblical message" rather than with the truth of an historical entity. There is no acceptance that the preaching of the New Testament Church had its foundation in fact, in the One Who lived and died and rose again according to the Scriptures. For the Christian faith it was the historic Jesus Who gave meaning to man, and not man's religious experience which gave meaning to Jesus' life and ministry.

Concerning existentialism's second emphasis—human freedom, one might assume that the Biblical stress upon man's personal responsibility has existential overtones. For, after all, does not the creation narrative tell us that man had a will, and does not a will imply freedom? The freedom which the New Testament—especially St. Paul in his Galatian Letter—espouses, however, is not a freedom to do as one pleases. There is no justification for any suggestion that St. Paul was an antinomian, having thrown over any firmly established moral order in order to ascribe freedom to man. On the contrary, throughout his entire life he was adamant in preaching that there were objective rights and wrongs, that it was not just man's idea which made for moral correctness. John Wesley forcefully declared: "It is a spokesman for Satan who 'speakest evil of the law.'"¹³

The Christian Faith from the Apostolic period has persistently taught that there was a difference between right and wrong, that man's freedom did not mean a freedom to ignore this distinction according to his own whim or fancy. On the contrary, the Biblical word to a century which seemingly has lost control of itself would be a challenge to return to absolutes. There is no doubt that Paul would say without equivocation: Adultery is wrong; sedition is wrong; drunkenness is wrong. They are wrong, he would have argued, because there is a fundamental difference between divine commandment and human exercise. Man himself had not the capacity to determine for himself what was right and wrong.

Another aspect of Biblical teaching relevant to his approach to man's freedom is on advocacy of the "disciplined life." One could use Wesley's adoption of the name "Methodist" for his societies as a suggestion of a disciplined life. His Oxford "Holy Club" was comprised of young disciplined men who denied themselves—not ascetically, but majestically—for the glory of God. His own strictly regulated day which began at four or five o'clock in the morning set Wesley himself in sharp contrast to many men of his time. Nor did Wesley cease his stern moralizing following his Aldersgate experience. The rules drawn up in 1739 for his "Societies" continued to remain in effect. Throughout his life, Wesley practiced and taught others definite rules of life. His reason was suggested in his sermon, "Justification by Faith," he said, "To man... God gave perfect law, to which he required full and perfect obedience."¹⁴

Thus it may be said that true morality is related to one's faith in Christ. Apart from that faith there can be no true morality, for the unredeemed man is incapable of good. On the other hand, no man who calls himself a lover of God could dare to say that he is free from restraint. One who believes that as a Christian he has suddenly been set free from all objective restraint is a child of the devil.

Paul would hold no quarter for any theory which might suggest that only in man's desire for freedom from restraint and in his renunciation of accepted standards is he truly free. Such teaching, he would contend, separates religion and morality. True freedom is rather a voluntary bondage to that which is greater than oneself. Paul identified himself as the *servant* of Christ.

Concerning the third generalization of contemporary existentialism: How right existentialism is to proclaim this a world of despair. It is—without God. What a day this becomes for the proclamation of the Gospel! For the Christian Faith, man's life is not *ultimately* futile, for man can rise into a state of joy. This is indicated by Jesus' presentation of what should be Christianity's fundamental teaching regarding the "New Birth." In fact, emphasis upon the conversion experience sounds a resounding "no" to gloom and despair as the end of man's life.

Biblical teaching on the New Birth as indicative of his hopeful outlook on man's future was persistent emphasis upon what came to be called God-like living. The most awesome, fearful words of Jesus are, "Be ye holy as your Father in Heaven is Holy."

Many volumes have been written in attempts to delineate what Methodism's Founder meant by Christian Perfection. Often it seems that he was far from being as precise at this point as we would have liked. There are, nevertheless, several features about this teaching which may be enumerated. He does make clear, first of all, by saying what he does *not* mean. Christian Perfection, he suggested, is not to be equated with perfect freedom from ignorance, mistakes, infirmities, or temptation.¹⁵ In addition to this negative description, it seems possible to suggest two positive approaches toward an understanding of Wesley's Perfection. Foremost is the frequent emphasis upon love. By Christian Perfection, Wesley himself declared, "I mean 'perfect love' or the loving God with all our heart. . . ."¹⁶ Perhaps his words addressed to his brother Charles are also suggestive. Here he defined Christian Perfection as the "humble, gentle, patient love of God and man ruling . . . the whole heart."¹⁷ In his tract, *Christian Perfection*, he sought to elucidate his meaning of the title as "that love of God and our neighbor which implies deliverance from all sin."¹⁸

These words suggest another emphasis by Wesley. He understood Christian Perfection as the expulsion of sin, both inward and outward, from the heart of man. It meant that man's heart has been "purified . . . from envy, malice, wrath, and every unkind temper;"¹⁹ it meant that man could walk as Christ walked and be holy even as the God Who called him was Holy. Wesley expressed himself clearly by stating that Christian Perfection is "that habitual disposition of the soul which in the sacred writings is termed holiness and which directly implies being cleansed from sin. . . ."²⁰

The late W. E. Sangster of British Methodism has contributed the following summary of Wesleyan teaching on Christian Perfection. "It is indwelling love, banishing all conscious sin, received by faith in an instant, and maintained from moment to moment by humble dependence on God. It is aware of itself, attainable in this life, and yet ascetically detached from the normal life of men."²¹

Whatever else this Wesleyan doctrine of Christian Perfection might mean, one certain implication is involved in its indication of Wesley's high regard for the potential of man by the help of God. Man does have a meaningful future toward which to press in anticipation that arrival is a real possibility. It is little wonder that in contrast to Wesleyan hope and joy, existentialism's man has been described by Dr. Mack Stokes as "an estranged creature whistling in the dark."²² Consider John Paul Sartre's drama, "No Exit." Three characters appear. They are assigned to a room for "eternity." This is their "hell," to be shut up together, to torture each other with their confessions, their accusations. There is no exit, no possible escape from these torments of life which constitutes what hell is. There is no possible forgiveness, no possible eradication of their dismal pasts. Life is nothing more than a torment for possessor and for antagonist.

For John Wesley, God provided man the victory over despair. The believer in Christ may know here and now the joy of the transformed life. Nor are there any limits as to what Divine grace can do for and in a human life. To fully understand oneself, for Wesley, meant a recognition of what one could become as the result of his confrontation with the Christ whose actual life and death is relevant for modern existence.

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Secularism — The Theological Challenge

EMIL BRUNNER, some years ago, in his book *Revelation and Reason* wrote: "The most characteristic element of the present age, and that which distinguishes it... is the almost complete disappearance of the sense of transcendence, and the consciousness of revelation."¹

The disappearance of transcendence—this can take us in either of two directions: the total abandonment of God in *favor of a secular society* or the total involvement of God *within the secular society*.

The former—the abandonment of God in favor of the secular conceded to the physical world the right to exert a controlling force over life. Several distinguishable corollaries are illustrative of this mood. There is a persistent appeal to physical accomplishments, minimizing or even neglecting human needs and values. Very often this implies the organization of personal and social life apart from any type of spiritual values. The thorough-going secularist operates as if there is no supernatural God whose existence would make any difference to life on this planet. It denies any validity to words and deeds not dealing with the objects which can be measured.

An illustration is the general attitude of twentieth-century man as he stands aghast at the towering buildings, the arching bridges, the stretching highways, declaring that here indeed is the strength of the nation. (Indeed, it might be said that such a secular emphasis can be found even within the church as it tends to glory in architecture and stone, in statistics and charts, while neglecting the weightier matters of human lives.)

Another general feature of Godless secularism is an emphasis upon the pleasures of life. Such a hedonistic trend makes possession of the "finer things of life" the major criterion for happiness. It implies a measurement by virtue of the significance to the self. This subtle suggestion often comes deluging its way into the homes of the modern world often by means of television and radio. Through the voices of the announcers come the claims that the "good life" requires a newer and better automobile, more and finer electric appliances, or more expensive decorative jewelry.

A further illustration of pervading secularism is an exceedingly high regard for the accomplishments of scientific inquiry. There is a tendency to believe that because the physicist has produced rockets capable of propelling capsules into space, and the medical technician has prepared antibiotics capable of speeding the cure of infections, science is potentially capable of producing all that human life needs for survival. This prevailing thought has been referred to as "scientism," the near veneration given by modern man to the advancement of human knowledge. When the secularist looks at the accomplishments of science, he often believes that the advancing human knowledge has rendered the Christian religion untenable. Thus, he looks at the teachings of Jesus and the Church as anachronistic in the modern world of space and atomic fission. Accomplishments resulting from scientific inquiry cause the secularist to believe that it is indeed the panacea for all ills, and makes forms of inquiry obsolete and unnecessary as they no longer have any significant contribution to make.

The second aspect of the disappearance of the sense of the transcendent involves the total involvement of God in the secular world, the nearly exclusive emphasis upon immanentism. In many instances, the churches no longer make ontological or dogmatic statements about a transcendent Deity. God-talk has been dispensed with in favor of a theological language speaking about Jesus of Nazareth, about human self-understanding, about the "Death of God." To make religion relevant to the secular society, the supernatural has to be excised, erased, forever.

But this cry for relevance so easily results in religion's being swallowed up in the secular society. A Franz Kafka parable tells of people who were offered the choice between becoming kings or the couriers of kings. The result was that everyone wanted to be couriers. Therefore, there are only couriers who hurry about the world, shouting to each other messages

that have become meaningless. Men have been offered the chance to lead—but they became couriers, and no one is left to make sense out of their message. Since there are no kings, there is no one to *serve*! This is living without asking what life is all about!

Just so, the Church has been offered the chance to *lead*, instead it has become a courier, and no one is left to make sense out of the message. Jesus never permitted himself to become *relevant*, but instead sought to redeem!

A recent issue of the *New Yorker* had in it a cartoon picturing a bearded beatnik wearing dark glasses, carrying a guitar strapped on his back. He was standing by the side of the road hitchhiking, holding in his hands a placard which bore the inscription, "Anyplace."

How suggestive this is of modern man's dilemma. It lies in his loss of direction; he is willing to go anyplace anyone will take him, and having arrived will do anything anyone asks him to do. It is possible that modern man's frustrations and dissatisfactions lie in the fact that he has fallen in love with everything and anything rather than with something and someone. Hosea of old well described his contemporaries, they "became detestable like the thing they loved."² This observation by the prophet comes from the context of Israel's permitting the adulterations of Baalism, that vegetative cult of Canaan, to infiltrate the Holy worship of Yahweh who had called them out of Egypt. He had thundered from Sinai: "I am the Lord your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before me."³

Is there an implied criticism of the cult of the relevant? Modern man has become so insatiated with making religion relevant to the current fashions—social and intellectual—that he may be in danger of loosing the God before whose throne nations must bow with sacred joy.

As Walter Eichrodt expressed it, Israel had lost a personal relationship with God by an impersonal entry into numinous forces of agricultural cults. In a desire to make religion relevant, they tried to imitate the mythology of the day, the mythology of the marriage of gods and goddesses with earth by having sexual relations with the cultic prostitutes at scattered shrines. Thus, in their religion, Israel had become as detestable as that which they loved.⁴

Kenneth Hamilton, in a literary study of the works of author John Updike, comments: "Updike links the boredom of much of our existence today with the poverty of the patterns we create." "We are all pilgrims on the way to divorce, says the narrator of 'The Music School,' a story in which Updike brings together the modern scientific world view, current matrimonial unfaithfulness, and the theology of the mass. The divorce between man and nature, man and woman, man and divine forgiveness—this is the experience of our age."⁵

Francois Fenelon, advisor to Louis XIV, penned some striking words centuries ago, words with a frightening sound even today: "We wish to love him on conditions that we give him words and ceremonies...on condition that we do not sacrifice to him our living passion...and of the conveniences of the soft life. We want to love him on condition that we love...all which he does not love at all... We want very much to love him on condition that we do not lessen in anything that blind love of ourselves, which goes as far as idolatry, and which causes us, instead of relating ourselves to God as to one for whom we were made, to want on the contrary to relate God to ourselves..."⁶

Are we able to catch what was in that ancient prophet's observation—the peoples had thought that they could sanctify the corrupt simply by calling it good, by saying that it was for good ends. They were making out of fornication and adultery what they called religious experiences. Do you recall the words of a British cleric a few years ago concerning the prostitute who helped a man regain his self-confidence by sleeping with him? Said the cleric: "Our proper response should be 'Glory to God in the highest.'"

Not so! cried the prophet of the Lord. Rather than prostitution being raised to a meaningful religious experience, the participator in this act

had been dragged to the level of the harlot. To call something good or holy does not purify that which is in itself evil. If this is what modern secular religion has done, then what has actually taken place is a sinful rebellion against God. Man has created, in his own image, the kind of god he wants. Pope's essay on man has these words: "Vice is a monster of so frightful mien, as to be hated, needs to be seen: yet, seen too oft, familiar with her face, we first endure, then pity, then embrace."

Far back in a rather obscure passage in the Book of Judges we read of a man called Micah.⁷ This Micah had apparently stolen some money from his mother, who upon discovering this heinous deed proceeded to pronounce a curse upon the thief. Either because he feared the curse or simply because of a troubled conscience, Micah was moved to confess his crime to his mother. This then caused his mother to reward his honesty with two hundred pieces of silver. Taking this silver, Micah proceeded to make an image and prepared a shrine in his home. Subsequently, a wandering Levite or member of Israel's priestly family wandered by. He was convinced by Micah to stay with him as a personal priest. The young Levite agreed to serve for a guaranteed annual wage.

Shortly thereafter a group of men from the tribe of Dan passed through the area. They were impressed by the young priest and by the shrine. They offered him more money for his services; he accepted. Together they took the image and the special garb Micah had provided and fled. Micah came into his shrine. As he looked, he shrieked—if I may be granted the privilege of paraphrasing the Scriptural account—"My God! It's gone!" He gathered some neighbors and gave chase. Seeing Micah and his friends hot on their heels, one of the Danites turned to Micah and asked him, "What ails you that you come with such a company," Micah is said to have responded with the words: "You take my gods which I have made, and the priest, and go away, and what have I left? How then do you ask, 'What ails you?'" A pathetic sentence from the Bible to portray the desperate condition of the twentieth century—the Christian Faith and secularism.

Look for a moment at the man Micah. Well back into the history of Israel specific pronouncements had been made regarding the prohibition of any form of image. The reason for this was obviously that these ancient people realized that any physical portrayal of God was by its very presence a limitation of God. In spite of the specific directions found in the Mosaic code, here was an Israelite whose understanding of God was so limited and so distorted that he apparently believed that apart from some physical manifestation of God in the form of a statue or shrine he could not sense the presence of the Almighty.

Note well: no hint is given by the Biblical writer of any cruel cult established by Micah. What he had done, however, was to degrade God to the mere representation by a figure. To this John Calvin commented: "It little matters what his intention was or what he told himself.... Any opinion concerning the heavenly mysteries which has been formed by men themselves... is the mother of error."⁸

Micah came into the room which had become the reposing room for his idol. How desperate he must have felt when only barren walls and a cleared floor met his terrified glance. How would anyone feel who suddenly thought that God had been taken away. Yet, if we look more closely at Micah, is it not true that his tragedy lay not in his having lost God, but in the fact that his understanding of God was so distorted that he believed he could lose him. He "lost" what he never had—a vital relation to the living God of his fathers.

Strange, is it not that Micah never seemed to comprehend that the God who could be stolen could hardly have been a God at all. It is like the story told of Heinrich Heine, that strange German romantic writer. It is said that on the last day he was to walk outdoors prior to the onset of a fatal spinal disease, he entered the Louvre, and stood before the statue of Venus de Milo. Later, as he reminisced, he wrote: "At her feet I lay a long time...and wept so as to move a stone to pity. And the...goddess..."

looked down at me... seeming to say: 'Dost thou not see that I have no arms, and therefore canst not help thee?' "

I see in Micah's despair a strange similarity to that climax of the secularizing of religion, the cultic movement known as Christian Atheism. Their cry is that God is dead. No one seems to sense the utter absurdity of the very proclamation—that the god who could die and stay dead could not be God at all. The only god who has disappeared from the vision of these men (like Micah) is the little idols they have concocted in their own sinful images. God is not dead! It is what they never really knew that has "disappeared and died."

Habbakkuk, Israel's prophet, put it: (Habbakkuk 2:19-20.)

Woe to him who says to a wooden thing,

Awake;

to a dumb stone, Arise!

Can this give revelation?

Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver,

and there is no breath in it.

But the Lord is in His holy temple;

let all the earth keep silence before Him.

A further observation from the account of Micah suggests that in addition to his god having been taken, his priest had also left him. This was the adding of tragedy to catastrophe. That priest by virtue of the fact that he had wandered away from the nation's central religious structure and had taken the position as "private chaplain" to Micah would suggest that he was one of those characters who thought that he could operate more freely away from the "organization." It appears that Micah and the priest were not consciously trying to abolish the organized religion of Israel. But they failed to realize that formal ceremony carried on apart from the central core of the religious heritage of the people was wrong.

Why did Micah hire the priest in the first place? More than likely it was because of his concern for precision in ceremony apart from the true source of religion. Micah was seemingly convinced that only to the correct rites would God respond. Rites and ceremonies—how terribly important they must have been to Micah. Now that his priest is gone, he feels he cannot worship. Micah never realized that personal faith and holiness come not through ceremony, but through reverence for God.

A magnificent tree falls to the ground in the woods. From it can be made furniture, or even an altar. Yet, ultimately it will decay. Yonder one sees a similar piece of wood, but this one is still fastened to its roots drinking the water of life. It grows. Just so, ritual and religion apart from the very source of religion—God Himself—is dead. Is there a parallel here to the modern advocate who abandons the church to seek for his religion in the secular city? Such a one is so like the young priest who wandered far from the center of Israel's religion, from the source of life.

What kind of character was that young priest? He was a man who turned his back on the religious heritage of his fathers and became a hired functionary, a man who left his first benefactor in order to keep pace with the allurements of the crowd which offered more glory and prestige. Was such a one really a loss to be mourned? Not even the priest's multiplicity of forms, not his aesthetic arrangement of decor could redeem him from his own callous living. How then could he have offered balm to the sin-sick soul of Micah?

Finally, the Biblical narrative portrays the group of Danites, that group of wanderers, looking for a place to settle. We are told that some five spies went out. It was they who came upon Micah's shrine and asked the Levite to pray for their success. When they returned with their comrades, they asked the priest to accompany them. He agreed; together they gathered up the images and the furniture and sped off. Thieves! Religious thieves! Thieves in the name of religion!

Rather than the moral demands upon the lives of these men, religion helped to make them violate whatever scruples they once may have had. In

the name of God, in the name of religion, they did as they pleased. That clergyman who not long ago suggested that a homosexual relationship or an evening with a prostitute might well be a profoundly religious experience would have made a good member of the Danites whose only concern for religion was in its potential benefits to them.

Strange! Often many seem to be unable to comprehend that when religion is used as a guilt-woven drapery to cover one's own immorality or expansion politics, it can hardly be called religion at all. These Danites looked upon religion, upon God, as devoid of moral claims upon their lives.

How like the words W. H. Auden puts into the mouth of a pray-er:¹⁰

O God, put away justice and truth, for we cannot understand them, and we do not want them. Eternity would bore us dreadfully. Leave Thy heavens and come down to our earth. . . . Be interesting and weak like us, and we will love you as we love ourselves.

What a strange distortion of the demands of God who spoke from Sinai: "Thou shalt not." Religion must catch hold of man's very being and make a difference in how he behaves or it is no religion at all. It is never the case of asking God to rubber-stamp his approval upon one's own sinful ways, but rather his willingness to accept the judgement of God on his sinful ways that modern society needs. "My God! It's gone!" Yes, to the man who has enshrined him in an image; yes, to the man who has relegated him to ceremony and ritual; yes, to the man who wants him for convenience. But not to the man who heard the words of the Nazarene who spoke: "If you have seen me, you have seen the Father."

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Communism — The Sociological Challenge

ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 22, 1905, the Tsar's Cossacks were turned loose on the striking workers in St. Petersburg, Russia.¹ Before the year—referred to by Lenin as “the year that buried patriarchal Russia”—had passed, some 2,800,000 people had taken part in the rebellion.

The priest, George Jopan, leader of the peasants who converged on the great square, asked amnesty for the strikers already arrested, an expansion of civil liberties, land reforms, and other ammenities. “Sire,” he said, “do not refuse aid to thy people! Throw down the wall that separates thee from thy people. Order and swear that our requests will be granted, and thou wilt make Russia happy.” The Tsar did not appear. His later concessions were too late, for the nation of Russia was never to be the same. Onto the stage of human history was to appear one Lenin, carrying into practice some of the philosophical theories and meanderings of his sometime traveling companion and intellectual mentor, Karl Marx.

Karl Marx, was born in Trier, Germany, the son of a prosperous Jewish lawyer, who for no apparent reason had himself and his family baptized into the state church when young Karl was six. His early study at the University of Berlin was marked by arrogance and satire. His acid tongue led him from his first love, teaching, into Journalism. His *Manifesto*, prepared in 1848, made no impression whatsoever on the intellectual community of nineteenth century Europe. Before the consideration of the Marxian writings, it would be fitting to consider briefly the philosophical and intellectual heritage of this relatively unknown aspiring journalist whose teaching, according to Lenin, “is all-powerful because it is true.” Lenin went on: “It is complete and harmonious providing man with a consistent view of the universe, which cannot be reconciled with any superstition, any reaction, any defense of bourgeois oppression. It is the lawful succession of the best that has been created by humanity in the nineteenth century—German philosophy, English political economy, and French socialism.”² (There is a very real dilemma here; Marx and Lenin both assert true objectivity, but each also claims cultural determinism.)

The primary intellectual stimulation for Marx seems to have been the philosophy of the German, Hegel. Philosophy, to Hegel, is a self-enclosed and self-sufficient system. Its subject matter is what *has* happened; its purpose is the clarification of the happening. To clarify an event is to explain it in terms of its logical necessity, the dialectic of unfolding truth. What is real is reasonable; what is reasonable is real.

Karl Marx accepted the Hegelian dialectic that reality is a process which is intelligible and moves with a logic all its own, but rejects the notion that this reality is the unfolding of absolute mind. It can be explained only as matter in motion, extended in space and time, existing in itself apart from mental awareness. The idea or world spirit of Hegel is to be replaced by the forces of production.

Marx seems to have accepted the criticism of Hegel offered by Ludwig Feuerbach. Feuerbach taught that Philosophy began with mere sense perception. By this it follows that man is the measure of the truth and is the true substance of his world. The world is nonsensual; man objectifies it and himself. Thus, truth is circumstantial.

Marxian philosophy is materialistic. Matter and its mode of existence, motion, are uncreatable and are their own final cause. The controlling force is not reason, but material (i.e. economic force). Men produce in order to live; as production increases a division of labor arises; out of this is an estrangement: The worker is alienated from the instrument of production, from the process of production, and from the product of production. Labor is construed as the commodity; the laborer does not receive equal to what he produces. The dialectic of Hegel has been utilized by Karl Marx as the vehicle of his own philosophical development.

Lenin has written: "Marx treats the question of communism in the same way as a naturalist would treat the question of the development of say, a new biological variety, once he knew that such and such was its origin and such and such was the definite direction in which it was changing."³ Marx would have agreed whole-heartedly with Feuerbach who believed that religion was nothing other than the relation of man to himself, or more correctly to his own nature. Feuerbach taught that the Divine Being is nothing else than the human nature purified, made objective and revered.

The end, then, for Marx, is inevitable: class-struggle, the recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which is necessary for the period separating capitalism and communism. (A current inconsistency can be noted: The clique rules today, not the proletariat; some three percent rules Russia. Forgotten when the slogan, "abolish private property, abolish evil," is proclaimed, is the greed for lust and power within the hearts of men.)

Marx is saying that primordial matter is the cause of the inevitable occurrence: *post hoc* proves *propter hoc*, (i.e. the cause must necessarily entail its effect.) The determinism of the self-sufficient material world has the solution to the social problems of the day.

Marxian thought builds upon his recognition of the misery of man and the sickness of society, which is the result of man's alienation from reality. Biblical teaching suggests that man's misery consists in his alienation from God. St. Paul, in Romans eight writes, The "Entire creation sighs and throbs with pain." James Stewart writes of Paul, "He knew that civilization was demon-ridden, and that ruthless forces held the soul of men in bitter thralldom. But what his piercing insight saw was that the mood of tragic desperation was itself the harbinger of hope."⁴

Marxian philosophy boasts of its humanism, its concern for the humiliated, the enslaved. But there is no true humanism, because it mutes the significance of the individual.

Levi cites the novel by Arthur Koestler, *Darkness at Noon*, in which Ivanov says: "There are only two conceptions of human ethics... One of them is Christian and humane, declares the individual to be sacrosanct, and asserts that the rules of arithmetic are not to be applied to human units. The other starts from the basic principles that a collective aim justifies all means, and not only allows, but demands, that the individual should in every way be subordinated and sacrificed to the community."⁵

Hegel lost in theory and Marx lost in practice the worth of the individual against the abstract collective. In the name of the class the individual is sacrificed and submerged. In the end the proletariat was of concern for Marx, not so much because it was suffering, but, because the dialectic of history forced the issue.

To return a moment to man's alienation. He is separated from matter, the means of production. The allegation is made that labor has been appropriated. Evil can be eliminated by changing economic relations. For Marx, salvation is an economic factor dependent upon the determined victory of the proletariat. This victory, however, depends upon the victory of the Communist Party, which is, in the end, the best judge of the interest of the proletariat class. The victory of the party is then dependent upon organization in which the actual power is vested. Since the ruling group has the greater insight into social matters, it is in the position to judge the truth of any proposition. Because, to Marx, all in the world is interrelated, the world can be seen reflected in political movements.

Implied in the dialectical materialism of Marx is philosophy of the state analogous to that of Plato. Perhaps few philosophers have taken Marx's philosophy of the state as seriously as they might, for its implications have much to do with the social milieu of our day. The belief that the redemption of the society can come only when productive means and private ownership are destroyed, leads to a ruthless struggle for power within the Party and generates a new morality which endorses every act that might further the revolution.

To take one contemporary illustration: Herbert Marcuse who is the intellectual spokesman for the movement often called the "New Left" applied certain Marxist concepts to American culture. For Marx's proletariat, Marcuse has the outcasts—the exploited, the unemployed, the dark-skinned. These are the vanguards of change—the potential "new man." Here may be found the crux of the assault upon society today. Our society, Marcuse has said, is one that compels the vast majority of the population to earn their lives in stupid, inhuman and unnecessary jobs. The free election of masters he has claimed, does not abolish the masters or the slaves. Free choice among a wide variety of goods and services sustain social controls over a life of toil or fear—that is, if they sustain alienation.

Because of the dialectical character of human society, there are "forces and tendencies which may break this containment and explode the society." Marcuse is critical of the positivistic influence in philosophy since the day of Hume. He views it as based upon the authority of fact; thus thought must be satisfied with fact, with the state of affairs.

This leads to Marcuse's attack on the modern university that has the "facts" which control the students. Thus the university is guilty of defending the *status quo*. Marcuse has written: "The real field of knowledge is not the given fact about things as they are, but the critical evaluation of them as a prelude to passing beyond their given form." He develops the Hegelian notion of the "power of negative thinking." "Thinking," said Hegel, "is, indeed, essentially the negation of that which is immediately before us." Negative thought must break down the given reality in order to create a new world."⁶ Man has the power to negate every given condition and make his own conscious work. Man is engaged in self-creation; he is the result of his own labor.

In a paper⁷ delivered by Dr. Bernad Zylstra of the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto, it was suggested that for Marcuse this leads to a "total transvaluation of western values—and for the revolutionary embodiment of new values in the political arena.... The dialectical process of history must continue until all reality is realized in its full potential"—happening for all.

According to the revolutionists, if man wants to be truly free, he must, first recognize his enslavement with an absolute refusal to accept "the system." Theoretical reason must become political revolution. Marcuse has further written: "The realization if the objective... would call for intolerance toward prevailing policies." In the "humanism" of Marcuse, as in that of Marx, one can find that as one does in Marx, that "humanism" is implemented by an anti-humanism.

The New Testament has some relevant words to this mood of our day. The Book of Acts, chapter three, records the account of a lame man who had been brought to the gate of the Jerusalem temple. Day after day some friends had done this favor for the man, leaving him in his misery just outside the building compound which represented everything that was holy in Judaism. What a picture this gives to the reader: tragedy, despair, discouragement, poverty—just outside the door of the temple.

By virtue of the fact that this had been a daily ritual, one would suspect that no one inside the temple had taken cognizance of his needs. There he lay, a symbol, perhaps, that the prosperity of the temple and its "Gate beautiful" had led to a loss of spiritual perception. Is it not true that the sovereignty of God extends not only over prayer and worship but also over all human activities? It is the concern of the people of God to see to it that the social order is functioning in accordance with God's will.

The life of Jesus would indicate that if he discriminated at all he did so in favor of the poor. Perhaps a crucial point in the narrative of the lame man at the gate of the temple is the implication that the people of God (i.e. The Church) needs to open its eyes to the needs of all who are about us, to become really aware of the fact that men do suffer and die right "alongside" of us. This is not to suggest that the Church as an institution should dabble in politics, but that Christian men and women, con-

cerned about housing and education, sanitation and recreation, should try to work for the glory of God.

Religion of Jesus' day had fallen to the place so that what went on inside the sacred walls meant little to life on the outside. It would seem that the ponderous piety of the Pharisee, the subtle sophistication of the Saducee, and the indifferent irreverence of the irreligious indicated all contact with life had been lost.

Genesis gives us the account of Cain and Abel. The author would have us visualize God looking around for Abel. Not finding Abel, God asks his brother Cain concerning Abel's whereabouts. "Am I my brother's keeper?" responded Cain.

An affirmative answer to Cain's question is implied as God asked: "What have you done?" "The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground." There is no indication in this narrative that Cain had deliberately plotted to murder his brother. It appears almost as if in a moment of anger at the prospect of God's willingness to accept the sacrifice of Abel rather than his own, Cain picked up a stone or a stick and struck a blow. The punch, the blow, a fall—a casualty of man's lack of concern for another. I suspect that Cain was shocked when he saw Abel lie so still. He had seen sheep die, but never a man. So still he lay—and he tried to cover it in order to hide it from God. Suddenly the voice! "Where is your brother?"

To be sure, life had its vertical dimension. But it must never be forgotten that it has also its horizontal dimension. God is concerned with how a man treats his brother. Is he now saying to us, "Your brother's blood is crying to me from the Asian battlefield, the riot-rocked cities, the hovels of the shanty-town."

On the island of Iona, off Scotland, there stands a monastery from the thirteenth century. In the ancient chapel on a gothic arch above the pulpit, the monks had carved the face of a man in torment with sightless eyes, open mouth, agony-lined face—a constant reminder to the worshipper that the needs of men must concern him.

There is a second observation that can be made from the lame man's request. We are told that he had been asking for coins from sympathetic passers-by. All he wanted was alms to assist him in his limited existence rather than strength to overcome his weakness. Does this portray much of mankind? Man is unaware of his real needs. He thinks he needs a surface ointment when in fact he needs radical surgery. The man asked for alms when he needed strength to walk again.

Is there an analogy here to the modern church and the poverty programs? All too often the people of this generation ask for hand-outs. They ask for and receive tokens which do little more than preserve them in their previous miserable condition. This creates a generation of parasites who come for their daily dole, day after day, expecting that it will be there—after all, it always has.

Man so often seems incapable of sensing the real problem of life. Basically, it is neither political nor economic; it is spiritual. This age needs, as every age before has needed the redemption of man and the whole social order. This will come, not by political realignment, by violent changes in government, nor by the expansion of poverty programs, but by the regeneration of the human heart. The world at the door needs to be given the bold imperative: "Rise and walk!" Get up from the lethargy of lost initiative; get up from the ignorance of carelessness; get up from that life of sin which has you so bogged down that you have lost all cognizance of yourself.

What the church of Christ needs to do is to put its emphasis on the core of the problem. The word *sin* needs to be recalled from its present place in ecclesiastical limbo. Is it not true that much poverty is caused by sin—not necessarily the sin of the poor, but the sin of the greedy, the bigoted and the proud, whose only concern is themselves.

There is a third observation drawn from the account of the lame man. It is from Peter's words: In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise up and

walk." We must note well—nothing was given to the man enabling him to continue in his meager existence as a crippled beggar. The power of Jesus Christ was never meant to be used to dole out palliatives to help worldly woes; it was (and is!) meant to put men on their feet. Dr. George Buttrick made the observation: "True charity is more than flinging a coin to a beggar."

There is a classic story that persistently appears, although its historicity is somewhat shrouded; nevertheless, it could well have occurred. St. Thomas Aquinas, the "angelic doctor" of Roman Catholic dogmatic theology, is said to have visited the papal chamber on an occasion when the Pope Innocent II was seated by a table counting gold. "You see," the Pope is said to have remarked, "the Church can no longer say, 'Silver and gold have I none.'" "True, Holy Father," responded Thomas, "but neither can it now say 'Arise, and walk.'"

Peter and John served as channels through which the power of the resurrected Christ could move in the world. Peter enabled the beggar to take his eyes off himself and focus them on Christ.

It is well to take note of the fact that Jesus himself stood apart from economic disputes. He refused to decide between two men disputing about an inheritance. Nevertheless, he taught that the gifts of God which men possessed should be distributed in such a way that all men should have a satisfying life. Jesus headed no social revolution nor legislated for social advances, but brought to men a spirit designed to set them crusading against injustice everywhere. Likewise, the church should concentrate on its God-given task—holding up the Christ for all to see. If the Church is not a channel for the grace of God to flow through into the world, it is little more than cumbersome machinery.

Man cannot be helped unless the Church can declare unequivocally that the cross of Christ, with all it typifies, did something for man which he could not do for himself or for one another.

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it must search out ways to reach them. Here are some ways to face the issue:

1. Approach private trailer camp owners with ideas and plans for conducting worship services for the campers. Ministerial associations or private persons can make such approaches and then recruit laymen to help conduct the services. Camp owners are quite open to clear-cut suggestions for such meetings. Responses to such services on the part of campers is quite significant. Often the percentage of campers attending is higher than persons attending a church services in a given town.

2. Where the circumstances allow, worship services could be provided anywhere large groups of people congregate, not necessarily trailer camps. It is not sufficient to say that the churches are within a few miles; let the people come in. The fact is that people will just not dress up to attend church. One can lament that fact but it still stands as a fact. Therefore, the church must make its penetrations of such gatherings of people with the truth about Jesus Christ. One alternative is possible: advertise widely if you are close to a camping area that you allow people to come to services in casual clothes.

3. Provide worship centers in shopping malls. There are about a dozen such places across the country, the newest one being in the Eastwood Mall shopping center near Youngstown, Ohio. This is not an unscriptural concept since Paul found his audiences in the marketplace. Going where the people congregate has validity since the people are not always willing to come to where the organized church is congregated. The "called out" body must "call out" to the masses of people who otherwise might ignore the church and consequently be ignored.

4. Have a worship service sometime through the week for those who will be traveling. Thursday evenings are being tried by some churches with modest success. This reaches the people before the weekend begins and provides the home-church setting for worship. It does not help the leadership problem nor the waning Sunday worship attendance but it does meet a growing need.

5. Provide printed or mimeographed worship services for your travelers to carry with them and then encourage individual families to conduct their own services. This would keep your families in touch with the church and maintain some sense of stability and union with the total congregation.

Finally here are some questions which the leadership of the church must face squarely:

1. What is the attitude toward people who are regularly away from the church service while traveling and/or camping? Will this attitude help to reach the millions of people on the move?

2. What are the opportunities for reaching the mobile people in the immediate area? Have these opportunities been explored recently?

3. Is every avenue being explored for encouraging nearby campers to attend worship services?

4. Is every avenue being explored for encouraging church members to attend services or provide their own while they are away? Are printed helps offered?

Mobility is a fact of life in America. The trend is clear, but what is not so clear is whether the church can meet the challenge of mobility.

(continued from page 2)

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INSTITUTIONAL MINISTRIES

BEN SORG

IT IS APPARENT TO MANY that existence in our culture is ever becoming more complex. It is also apparent that there are increasing numbers of people who, for one reason or another, are finding greater difficulty in independently maintaining their own existence.

The number of institutions are steadily increasing. New types of institutions are continually being innovated. They serve those who are very young, and those who are very old. They serve the mentally retarded, the drug addicted, the unwed mother, or those who need vocational re-training.

For the purpose of our discussion we will deal primarily with those institutions which require the residency (or confinement) of their patients. These types of institutions are unique in-as-much as they tend to create a culture within themselves, designed to be therapeutic for the resident. This type of institution usually has one or more full time chaplains as a part of its unique community.

The chaplain of a mental hospital uses specific methods and terminology to communicate the gospel. These methods would understandably be different from those used by a chaplain at an institution for youthful offenders. Yet it seems to be difficult for the parish clergyman to understand that he himself relates very poorly in either setting.

Some parish pastors who have spoken at institutions as visiting clergymen, have been frustrated by the uninhibited feed-back of their captive congregation, or perhaps by the lack of any response at all. Rather than to understand that this was caused by their own unfortunate choice of methods and words, they generally conclude that the chaplaincy has little potential and that it is unworthy of their serious effort.

It naturally follows that some of these pastors see the chaplaincy as a possible early retirement, or as an escape from their unsuccessful encounters with the official board.

Unfortunately, it also naturally follows that some of these pastors are motivated to seek the chaplaincy, and that their tour

of duty is tragically unproductive. They have proven, of course, their original premise.

There are clergymen, however, who recognize that they have skills and temperament for a particular institutional environment. They take the time to develop and test these skills by serving internships in supervised clinical exposures. They come to the chaplaincy eager and full of anticipation for a productive ministry.

Two years ago a second chaplain was added to our staff. He came to us after twenty-five years parish work. His ecclesiastical superiors and friends generally concluded that he needed a rest. To the contrary, he came to us after nine months of clinical training in a correctional institution. He is now part of a ministry that has seen former inmates who now have become active lay Christians in their communities. Six former inmates are presently enrolled in colleges preparing for the full-time ministry; one of these has been recently appointed to the foreign mission field.

We all are aware that ours is an age of specialization. Yet there are some clergymen who strongly feel that the only way to dispense the old "Gos-pill" is by the time honored methods and phrases chanted in three-quarter time.

As more of our population becomes destined to have institutional experiences during some parts of their lives, we must stop mourning because so many pastors are leaving the parish to become specialists in these areas. There is a growing need for pastors to become skillful and sensitive in communicating the Peace of God to those who are in special crises. We must learn to communicate to persons who are in every type of situation.

COUNSELLING MINISTRIES

JAY G. MYERS

PEOPLE HAVE PROBLEMS and become troubled. Initially most try to work out a solution, but when the present discomfort becomes too great they will seek help. Where they go to seek that help depends basically on two conditions; one is the individual's personal orientation, the other the availability of sources of help.

The fact that forty-six per cent of people seeking counsel go first to a clergyman indicates something of the opportunity of the minister to serve, as well as his responsibility to become as proficient as possible in this vital work. Unfortunately not all who are called upon for such service are adequate to answer that call, and even more unfortunately too many do not know they are inadequate. But this need not be so. Counselling belongs in the area of Christian ministry; in fact is a distinct and unique facet of the profession.

No one need be reminded that this is an age of specialization. Man's opportunity and resources from which to learn have become so immense that it is absurd for anyone to think that it is possible to be an expert in all areas of his own profession. In many instances clergymen have apparently failed to realize that to specialize in any given part of their "calling" as men of God is not an act of deserting that call. Not too many years ago if a priest or minister went into institutional chaplaincy work his friends and family wondered why he had left the ministry or what he had done to catch the wrath of some bishop or district superintendent. Even more recently people have wondered why a pastor leaves the ministry to become a counsellor.

Somehow there must be a greater awareness within the ministry itself that counselling is a distinct specialty with a place that needs to be filled by people who recognize its importance and prepare themselves for such service without qualms about whether they are "leaving the ministry." It seems unfortunate but nevertheless true that members of other professions have on numerous occasions seemed more aware of the minister's role here than has been the case within the ministry itself. A psychiatrist speaking to a class of clergymen one day, opened his lecture with this remark: "If your profession had not abdi-

cated its role many years ago we fellows would never have gotten into business." Obviously an over-simplification, but the speaker was an active churchman who also knew something of church history, so his statement had to carry some weight. One has to wonder where or how the art of counselling was relegated to a necessary chore that had to be done when time from more important Kingdom work could be spared.

The word "counselling" means many things to many people and this is as it should be, but for the purpose of clarification of these remarks let us note the following definition. It provides some definite description as well as limitations. C. G. Wrenn wrote, "Counselling is a personal and dynamic relationship between two people who approach a mutually defined problem with mutual consideration for each other to the end that the less mature or more troubled of the two is aided to a self determined resolution of his problem."

As one weighs this statement phrase by phrase and thinks upon the adjectives used he sees that what is defined here is a distinct process within a definite framework that cannot come to be by mere chance or wishful thinking. It implies an interpersonal relationship that will be developed only by conscious effort upon the part of the counsellor as the initiator. In the role of the counsellor it defines a person who is self-understanding enough and discerning enough to be able to lay aside his own problems, fear, or biases well enough that he can be as concerned about the problem of the counselee as is the counselee himself.

Matters not mentioned in this definition may be as significant as those that are. Nothing is said about "Doing" something, having the "right answer," trying to make the counselee "see things," or other so-called solutions one is prone to fall back upon when at a loss what to do to help another. But the purpose of this paper is not to analyze a definition of counselling, (surely this one will stand on its own merits) but hopefully to emphasize the case for the ministry of counselling among some men and women who believe they are called to Christian ministry and may yet be looking for the most effective way to carry out that ministry.

Counselling is frequently referred to as an art. That it is, and like any art it must be practiced to be learned. Some will find it interesting, challenging and sometimes obviously fruitful. Others may find it a burden and an unpleasant chore which must be done from time to time. Among the former and through

their continual efforts will the religious ministry, as the entire profession, recognize the need in the field and the justification for some to specialize in developing this type of ministry.

We stated in the opening of this paper that people in distress or overcome with what appear to them unsolvable problems will seek counsel. If qualified people are not available they will settle for less, frequently to more harm than good. The matter of limitations has not been covered here but that will come. It has been our observation that the more qualified the clergyman becomes in the specialty of counselling the easier it is for him to identify his limitations.

Frequently people entering into a course of study to sharpen their counselling ability will state, "Well, I want only to deal with "spiritual questions." There may be various reasons for this statement as they embark upon a new venture but ultimately in nearly all cases they find that "spiritual" includes far more of the gamut of helping people with problems than they anticipated. Further study and more inclusive concepts of what shall be considered as "spiritual" questions might obviate the reluctance of some potentially efficient counsellors to enter the field.

People are repeatedly examining their own hierarchy of values. Probably most would not put it in those words, but why else are they seeking correct answers in so many life situations? What opportunity this opens to the person who prepares himself to assist without forcing, lead without pulling, meanwhile tacitly witnessing to his own beliefs and values. Some such persons must answer the call. One is reminded of the short illustration of Jesus about the man who swept out the devils and replaced the clean house with nothing else. Someone must help him replace what he must throw out with better things. This is the urgency of Christian ministry in the field of personal counselling.

MINISTERING TO STUDENTS

J. THOMAS GRISSO

IF WE BROADLY DEFINE a "minister" as one who is helpful or gives aid, then every campus has its share of ministers in the form of counsellors and concerned professors. They minister to students by counseling them concerning various academic, psychological, and social options facing students. The Christian minister to students is a specialist in the counseling field, hopefully fulfilling certain needs not usually met by other counselors on campus. A brief look at the process of change which students undergo may serve to point out these special needs.

The primary psychological work facing a college student is the transition from his child-self to the establishment of some workable adult identity. This process is characterized by a good deal of exploratory behavior, in which the student "tests out" the myriad of possible roles and values open to him. A certain degree of flux and temporary instability, then, is a necessary characteristic of the student who is attempting to discover—not who he is—but what roles, values, and beliefs seem to "fit" him, and who he wishes to become.

Recent release from parental control makes the process both exhilarating and frightening, as with any situation in which long-established boundaries for our behavior are suddenly removed. While they relish this freedom to explore, most students recognize the need for something dependable during this process—some thread of consistency or stability to which they can hold while making the necessary explorations. The search for an adult identity cannot proceed too far without faith in some ultimate *reason* for exploration—some confidence that the whole search makes sense. The Christian minister, then, can offer the student such a reason, in the form of Christian faith.

I continually see students who are desperately looking for some meaning or purpose upon which to base their experiences. Their search for it is the object of much of their drug experimentation, their frequent interest in various Eastern and occult philosophies, and other sources which claim to hold ultimate answers to ultimate questions. Most students on most campuses, however, are resistant to Christianity as a possibility for satis-

fyng this need. This resistance comes from a number of sources, two of which may be worth mentioning.

First, for many students, religious belief has been a primary source of guilt, rather than assurance and comfort. As such, it has often been harmful to both their psychological and spiritual development. Guilt tends to create a perpetual sense of failure for many people; and in their new freedom, some students are likely to reject the religious system which is the source of this threat to their own self-image. Second, many students have been exposed to individuals who, while identifying themselves as Christians, have engaged in behavior which seemed to be grossly inconsistent with the Christian belief they professed. Youthful idealism interprets this to mean that not only is the hypocritical Christian at fault, but also Christian doctrine itself. While this assumption is illogical, it nevertheless has biased many students to reject the idea that a Christian life could hold anything of worth for themselves.

Overcoming these barriers is no easy task. Whether or not it can be achieved will depend primarily on personal characteristics of the minister himself—i.e., his style of life, his way of presenting himself, and how he views his role on the campus. I may lose some readers at this point, but I feel strongly that a sound Christian belief is not, in and of itself, a sufficient prerequisite for engaging in a successful ministry to students. Psychological research on attitude and belief change shows clearly that people may most readily be led to change their belief systems when they value the persuader himself as a person—i.e., when they already believe that he himself has special worth or is of some particular significance in their own lives. The messenger must be trusted—perhaps even loved—before the message can even be given a hearing.

The following are a number of guidelines which I feel might contribute to a fruitful ministry on a campus. In addition, they may serve to indicate the kind of person who is most likely to gain the trust of students—and therefore likely to have a fruitful ministry.

1. *Focus at least as much on satisfying non-spiritual needs as you do on satisfying spiritual needs.* It is by such concerns that you become valuable to students, thus increasing your opportunities to witness effectively.

2. *Don't sell out to "relevance."* That which is socially relevant is of major concern on many campuses today. If you do not concern yourself with important social issues, of course, you will not be satisfying point No. 1 above. On the other hand, if your *primary* activity is that of championing socially-relevant causes, then your ministry may suffer. You are probably identifying with a small, special-interest group, thus decreasing the chances that you can effectively satisfy the spiritual needs of the majority of students on the campus who may not identify with that group.

3. *Keep an open mind.* Your objective is to offer that belief which you have, not to alienate those whose beliefs are different from your own, religiously or politically.

4. *Stay out of your office.* Or at least, stay out some of the time. The number of students who come to someone's office in time of need is extremely small. Find the campus gathering-places, and make yourself visible and available.

5. *Find out the types of students with whom you work best.* Students break down into rough groupings—the intellectual, the dependent and insecure, the activist, the apathetic, the socializer, etc. No one person can work effectively with all student types, so you may want to focus on a few. This takes time and close observation of one's own reactions to the various types, as well as their reactions to you. Enlist the aid of students close to you who may be able to deal more effectively with student types with which you feel less comfortable.

6. *Get to know as many professors as possible.* They are often the first to know about the problems of specific students. If the professor has met you, he is more likely to suggest to the students that you might be of help to him.

7. *Work cooperatively with other sources of help on campus*—for example, counselors, deans, psychologists, medical personnel, etc. The Christian minister is a specialist in a network of counseling services on most campuses. As such, methods of cross-referral should be clearly established and used frequently. You may often come across problems which are more appropriately handled by these other specialists.

8. *Don't plan organized activities or projects by yourself,* not even a Sunday morning service. Take cues from interested students, and guide them in their plans. Don't be afraid to be-

come involved in student projects which are not traditionally "religious" in nature, as long as they may be a vehicle for expression of Christian concern for one's fellowman, a possible opportunity for witness, or a source of action which can solidify the Christian faith of those engaged in the project.

In summary, the Christian minister may best be of service to students by offering them, in the form of Christian faith, something dependable to which they can hold during their sometimes chaotic search for adult identity. If he can do this without stifling the student's curiosity to explore and experiment, then the belief itself will become an integral part of the student's new identity. Thus will the campus minister have done the students, and the world, a great service.

ON CREATIVE MINISTRY

OWEN H. ALDERFER

IT SEEMS next to impossible for the minister in the seventies to labor without some sense of inadequacy in the face of the demands placed upon him by the complexity of the age and the needs of the people he must serve. If he is serving in a "traditional pastorate"—whatever that is—the minister is probably tempted to feel that he must do something different and unusual to keep up with the times. The answer, he may feel, is in creative approaches to ministering, and so in the name of creativity, the minister may introduce all manner of novel and even bizarre forms and expressions into the church. Jazz masses, sensitivity groups, rock combos, dialogue sermons, religious dance, multimedia programs, and a variety of activities *ad infinitum* find their way into the church in a concern for creative ministry.

That there is need for creative approaches to ministry for the seventies is obvious. This need is perennial. The demand and urgency for creativity is multiplied because of the acceleration of change and variety creating a plethora of demanding situations in the world of the seventies. Alvin Toffler in his book *Future Shock* dramatizes this by pointing out that a line could be drawn somewhere in the 1950's dividing time in half. Man's experiences in all time prior to that date would be equal to man's experience in the few years since that time. This condition puts a burden for creative ministering upon the church that is more than something in the imagination of the minister.

Having declared the need for creative ministering in the seventies this essay seeks to point to some efforts in this direction along with some possibilities in this regard before concluding with a statement of a philosophy regarding creative ministries for this decade. In teaching at Ashland Theological Seminary the writer has led classes which have searched out descriptive statements on the subject and which have visited various forms of ministering presently in existence which might be called creative ministries.

Space will not allow an extended description of any or even a brief description of many creative ministries visited; however, an introduction to a few may be in order. High on the list of

creative ministries contacted, as far as class interest was concerned, is the Pittsburgh Experiment under the direction of Paul Everett. This ministry, begun under the inspiration of the late Reverend Sam Shoemaker, reaches a broad spectrum of needs, coordinating action and leading the way in interdenominational cooperation. Not a church itself, the Experiment serves as an enabling agency for the institutional church and for less formal agencies to perform a Christian ministry that affects a great metropolitan area.

Completely different in form and function are two ministries visited in the Chicago area. One is Circle Church, a growing inner-city church under the leadership of a team of full and part-time ministers. Circle Church owns no property and has no buildings of its own; it is committed to investing its resources in persons well-equipped to minister to the situation to which the church is called. A committed leadership is working to equip a committed membership to be involved in the performance of its ministry throughout the city. Another Chicago-based ministry is Reba Place Fellowship, a modern Christian communal society which seeks to minister creatively by making a Christian witness to the economic and social structures of the age. Here is a community living together as church—in a well-considered pattern and good order—with the objectives of realizing Christian community, experiencing freedom from the necessity to accumulate goods, and living corporately in the world in obedience to Christ. It might be noted that reactions of men visiting these and other expressions of creative ministry varied from excitement to skepticism to boredom—typical of the reactions of a cross section of society, no doubt.

An extensive list of writings on ministering creatively in the seventies could be offered with comment. A brief bibliography is offered at the conclusion of the article for provocative reading.

What should be said *about the concern for creativity* in the way of a philosophic statement regarding ministering creatively in the seventies? It seems evident that any effort to minister—at any time—must be measured by several criteria: (1) Is the approach to ministering an end in itself or is it a means to a greater end? A number of things happening in churches appear to be ends in themselves; as such, they are scarcely more than “fun and games.” Any ministry must lead beyond itself to Christ

the Ultimate Minister. (2) Does it touch life with Life; that is, does it really minister? Anything called a ministry must meet the test of the term itself by meeting some point of human need. (3) Do form and function correspond? The "shape" of a ministry must correspond with the objective to be realized; only then will ministry take place.

These criteria apply to any ministry; however, they are noted here relative to a philosophy regarding creative ministries. In the seventies—or in any age—the minister must approach any of his tasks creatively. "Creative ministries" is more in the way the minister approaches his work than it is in doing new things. The minister should preach, counsel, administer, and organize creatively. This may call for new approaches in a time when a host of new media are used to communicate ideas. The minister, using discretion, should feel free to adapt any effective new method or medium that will communicate the message and accomplish the ministry.

Ministering creatively does not mean that a minister tries "to do everything." A point useful here was given to a class in *The Church and Its Ministries* by the Reverend Roger Shoup of Calvary Presbyterian Church in Cleveland, one of the few inner-city churches that is alive and more than holding its own in that city. He noted that a church or a minister should not try to do everything; the church or minister should do a few things but do them well. If the ministry is performed creatively, people will be ministered to and the Church will be a living force for God in the world.

Presented here is a handful of works that may be provocative for one wishing further to pursue creative approaches to ministering in the seventies.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE CURRENT ISSUE

THE RELATION of church to state is a concern with which Christians have long wrestled. Having its rise in a sacral society in which religion and the state were two sides of the same coin, Christianity represented a new concept in the structuring of society. This was the view that men may walk together in the market place but that they need not meet together in the same temples to worship. This new approach was a threat to the sacral structure of Roman society, and thus Christians were persecuted primarily as enemies of the state.

With the Constantinian settlement a "Christian sacral state" came into being that prevailed until modern times—even in the church-state structures of the great reformers. Now and again this structure was challenged; the Anabaptists on the Continent, the Separatists in England, the Rhode Island Colony in America all called for a restoration of the primitive Christian vision that the church and the state are separate realms.

Aspects of this problem are very much with us in our time. Questions of prayer and Bible reading in the schools, public support for parochial schools, and a call for a national preference for Christianity are evidence of this. And so this issue focuses on church and state. James E. Wood, Jr., one of the outstanding authorities and spokesmen on this concern in America today, contributes two basic articles on them. These were presented by Dr. Wood during the all-institutional study on church and state at the seminary, February, 1971.

Dr. Y. David Kim brings a Biblical and theological perspective to the study of church and state in a statement on the idea of theocracy as developed in the Old Testament.

Owen H. Alderfer, Editor

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THE AMERICAN TRADITION IN CHURCH AND STATE

JAMES E. WOOD, JR.

THE AMERICAN TRADITION of a free society in church and state, the non-establishment of religion and the free exercise of religion, represented on behalf of the founding fathers a bold experiment unparalleled in human history. The fact is that not until the twentieth century were the principles constitutionally and unequivocally enunciated anywhere else in the world. The uniqueness of America as a free society in church and state is of profound importance in understanding both its political and religious history.

Religious liberty, which significantly is the concern of the First Amendment in America's Bill of Rights, was fundamental in the development of American civilization. And for Americans the principle of complete religious liberty, to quote from a famous case before the New York Supreme Court, "has always been regarded by the American people as the very heart of its national life."¹ More than three-quarters of a century ago, David Dudley Field, one of America's greatest jurists of the nineteenth century, declared that the separation of church and state in America was the "greatest achievement ever made in the cause of human progress." "If we had nothing else to boast of," Field wrote, "we could lay claim with justice that first among the nations we of this country made it an article of organic law that the relations between man and his Maker were a private concern, into which other men have no right to intrude."² Indeed, the American tradition of the free society in church and state is, as Leo Pfeffer has expressed it, "America's contribution to civilization."³ Peter Drucker has written that "the relationship between religion, the state, and society, is perhaps the most fundamental—certainly it is the most distinctive—feature of American political as well as American religious life."⁴

I

The First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, "Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof," is historically rooted in a distinct doctrine of the church and a particular view of the state. It is derived from: (1) the concept of the

free or secular state in which the church, independent of the state and political control, is thus to be dependent upon God for its authority and the accomplishment of its mission; and (2) the principle of voluntarism in religion, which affirms that the church must depend upon the voluntary responses of men. In judicial language, as reiterated in recent years by the U.S. Supreme Court, the First Amendment means the separation of church and state, namely that the state may not use religious means for the accomplishment of secular ends and that the church may not use secular means for the accomplishment of religious ends.

The theological basis of the First Amendment rests upon the sovereignty of God, man in the image of God, and the human problem of sin. The concept of a free church and a free society, even today actualized in only a limited number of nation states, is clearly one of the major achievements of the modern world and a distinct contribution of the United States. Not until the inauguration of the "livelie experiment" of Rhode Island was religious liberty through church-state separation actually realized. Both the sovereignty of God and the sinful nature of man precluded the realization, as well as even the notion, of a Christian state and a state church. It was Roger Williams who found the basis for the secular state, as well as the free church, within the context of his theological thought. The state can never assume the role of God who alone is Lord of conscience. Therefore, Williams wrote, "No civil state or country can be truly called Christian."⁵

More than a century later, Isaac Backus, a leading clergyman in the whole movement for separation of church and state in the United States, maintained that to be Christian all direct connections between church and state must be broken. Backus wrote, "God has appointed two different kinds of government in the world which are different in their nature and ought never to be confounded together; one of which is called civil, the other ecclesiastical government."⁶ For a commonwealth to be truly Christian, it must restrict its authority and rule to the secular, i.e. to the world and temporal affairs. "Now who can hear Christ declare that his kingdom is NOT OF THIS WORLD, and yet believe that this blending of the church and state together can be pleasing to him?"⁷ Religious matters are to be separated from the jurisdiction of the state not because they are beneath the interests of the state, but, quite to the contrary, because they are too high and holy and thus are beyond the competence of the state. For "the free exercise of private judgment," Backus

wrote, "and the unalienable rights of conscience are of too high a rank and dignity to be submitted to the decrees of council, or the imperfect laws of fallible legislators."⁸

"No-establishment of religion" means a secular state, a limited state in which the people have excluded the authority and jurisdiction of the state from religious affairs. The First Amendment provides a clear example of this: "*Congress* shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." The disability here is explicitly on the state, not on religion. The totalitarian state, which is an unlimited state, grants a qualified freedom of religion, but specifically restricts the activities and programs of the church and its clergy. The secular state does not restrict religion *per se*, but, on the contrary, excludes the state's jurisdiction from religious affairs. The disability is on the state, not on religion.

The no-establishment of religion requires that the church be the church and the state be the state, even though admittedly their functions may frequently and inevitably overlap. As Anson Phelps Stokes expressed it, "It means that churches are equal in the sight of the State, and that no church has the advantages or the disadvantages of establishment."⁹ The secular state, as expressed in the free society, is neither Christian, nor Buddhist, nor religious, nor irreligious. To express it another way, the secular state seeks neither to promote nor to interfere with religion. Philip Schaff, America's most distinguished church historian of the nineteenth century, expressed it pointedly when he wrote that the American Constitution "is neither hostile nor friendly to any religion; it is simply silent on the subject, as lying beyond the jurisdiction of the general government."¹⁰

Unfortunately, there are those who have misrepresented the secular state as one whose ultimate commitment is to secularism. Consequently, many churchmen have come to regard the secular state as inimical to religion and as the source of irreverence, immorality, and intemperance. Meanwhile, the secularist also has misrepresented the secular state, as one scholar has observed, by converting "the secular from the neutral into the *de facto* opponent of religion. . . . He has converted the secular into secularism."¹¹

Distinction must always be made between "secularization" (i.e. the secular) and "secularism." The former has to do with freedom from church or ecclesiastical control, while the latter is a philosophy that excludes all forms of religious faith and worship. Secularism is practical atheism in that God and religion

are ignored, and it provides nowhere for God to be God of men's lives. Thus while defending the secular character of America's public schools, the American Council on Education has rightly declared, "We reject secularism as a philosophy of life and we cannot agree that it has ever been accepted as such by the American people."¹² While no doubt descriptive of the life style of many Americans, secularism is not a philosophy which, in principle, at least, is accepted as normative by the American people as a whole. As a matter of fact, the state committed to secularism is incompatible with the free society and certainty cannot be equated with the secular state. For example, the Communist state is avowedly committed to secularism, and hostility to religion is officially promulgated. Far from being uncommitted as the secular state, the Communist state is committed to secularism, and therefore is not a free society. Secularism has always been a rival to the historic forms of religious faith. What free men, free Americans, must perceive is that the concept of the secular state is not born out of hostility to religion, for hostility to religion is completely irreconcilable with the very nature of the secular state. Franklin H. Littell was quite right when he perceptively wrote in his Protestant interpretation of religion in American history: "The whole image of early America as a 'Christian nation' (i.e. Protestant controlled) is a lie which must be struck down. . . ."¹³ Clearly from a constitutional point of view, America is a secular state, a free society, in which neither religion nor irreligion enjoys any official status.

The truth is that the secular state is one which the church should strongly welcome. As Gayraud S. Wilmore has so incisively written, the church "has nowhere to stand except with the secular. It refuses to make an idol of religion. It makes common cause with the authentically secular without being permanently wedded to it. It believes in the secular not only as an instrument of divine providence and judgment but also as a partner with the church in the work of reconciliation."¹⁴ Those who are wary of the concept of the secular state, as the condition of the no-establishment clause of the First Amendment, would do well to note that political absolutism and state deification have all too often accompanied the notion of the Christian state. Certainly history warns that the concept of the Christian state is as hazardous for true religion as for civil liberty. As the free church is incontrovertibly in conflict with the totalitarian church, so the free society is inevitably incompatible with the totalitarian state.

II

The First Amendment rests upon not only the notion and historical reality of a secular state but also a pluralistic society in which there is "the free exercise of religion." As the separation of church and state is to be regarded as the guarantee of religious liberty, so the secular state is the legal basis of the pluralistic society. The issue of religious liberty, which inevitably involves liberty of conscience and thereby all civil liberties, is crucial to the understanding and maintenance of American democracy as a free society. Indeed the correlative of religious liberty is nothing less than the right of dissent, for as Charles Evans Hughes stated it, "When we lose the right to be different, we lose the right to be free."¹⁵ A pluralistic society is one in which minority rights are constitutionally guaranteed, and the free exercise of religion—freedom *of* religion and freedom *from* religion—is assured. While the theological basis of the secular state is the sovereignty of God, the theological basis of the pluralistic society is the sacredness of persons. Indeed, the conception of man as a child of God is the basis of democracy. As Thomas Jefferson expressed it, "All men are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights."

One of the widespread myths that has evolved in the development of democracy in the modern world is the belief that the essence of democracy is simply majority or party rule, rather than the free and open society which prizes the sanctity and worth of individuals. To the emerging nations of Africa and Asia, as well as nations of the West, evidence is mounting that democracy is identified with a classless society which in turn is maintained by a sovereignty of the people or masses. Dissenters and minority groups thereby experience disfranchisement and discrimination even in nations which proudly call themselves "democracies." In actuality the term "democracy" has even been used in some instances to sanctify the disfranchisement of various minority groups.

For centuries the cruelest acts committed against man were done primarily in the name of religion. Slavery, persecutions, and holy wars were carried on under the banner of religion. Man has ever sought divine sanction for his behavior even when it meant to make holy that which was clearly unholy. Perhaps it is hardly less ironic today that the tendency of modern man is to justify his vilest and most inhuman acts in the name of *democracy*!

Furthermore, liberty for oneself is not easily extended to include liberty for others. History is replete with examples of

men who have advocated liberty, but actually were opposed to according liberty to those with differing views. John Locke, for example, spoke eloquently of the right of individuals to life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, and property, but denied full toleration to atheists or Roman Catholics in England. Liberty has often been advocated by groups for themselves, while denying liberty to others. The early Puritans of Massachusetts desired freedom for themselves, and Puritan leaders expressly condemned democracy, which Governor John Winthrop called "the meanest and worst of all forms of government."¹⁶

Religious liberty as a universal principle has been most eloquently defended by religious minorities, and most vigorously assailed by religious majorities. The alleged "rights of majorities" easily become the basis of trampling upon the rights of minorities! This viewpoint was tersely expressed several years ago by a reviewer in summing up his judgment of a book on religion in the public schools. "This readable, scholarly study," he wrote, "provides ample evidence that we all believe in separation of church and state—for the other fellow's church!" Religious liberty, like civil or political liberty, is easily and fervently claimed for one's own association or group, but is often not readily granted to others.

The real enemy to the pluralistic society in the modern world is the totalitarian state, in which the free exercise of religion, the basis of all civil liberties, is inevitably seriously abridged. That is to say, the crucial issue between the free society and the totalitarian state is always the question of civil liberties.

Prior to 1914, totalitarianism was primarily represented in the monarchical forms of government in Europe, e.g., the Kaisers of Germany and the Czars of Russia. From the time of the French Revolution, however, the sovereignty of the monarch was gradually replaced by a sovereignty of the people which subsequently, Emil Brunner observes, "conquered the Western world."¹⁷ State totalitarianism of the past was primarily state versus state, whereas modern state totalitarianism is directed primarily against the individual—i.e. the free exercise of his civil liberties. A new state absolutism has emerged: the totalitarian state built not upon the sovereignty of a monarch, but a sovereignty of the people; i.e., not monarchical rule, but majority or party rule.

Herein is justifiable cause for concern, even with the growth of democracy as a concept of government in the modern world.

For democracy itself, if understood to mean merely the rule or sovereignty of the people, is no guarantee against state absolutism or the totalitarian state. It must be recognized that totalitarianism, including totalitarian democracy, is the absolutizing of the political power wielded by the state. Totalitarianism is actualized, as Brunner says in *Christianity and Civilization*, thus: "If everyone is a functionary of the state, and if nobody can make his living independently of the state machinery, if there are not other than state schools, if the press, the cinema, the radio, are state controlled, free society is lost, opposition and public expression of independent opinion become impossible. Every deviation from the programme of the state becomes rebellion and sabotage."¹⁸

To be sure, democracy is essentially self-government; nonetheless this does not preclude "the tyranny of the majority," of which John Stuart Mill warned. The dictatorship of the majority may be no less totalitarian than the dictatorship of a party or a personality cult. In the free society, state absolutism is controlled by guarantees of civil liberties, which are, in effect, limitations on government and political authority. As propounded by John Locke in England and Jean Jacques Rousseau in France, civil liberties are the natural rights of mankind and thus are too sacred for a government to transgress upon or to disregard. Thomas Jefferson expressed the view that men are endowed with "inherent, inalienable and unchanging rights." In the unlimited or totalitarian state there are no natural or inalienable rights of the individual. In our own cultural heritage, American civil rights guarantee freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, and the right "for a redress of grievances." There is today, and justifiably so, special concern for "equal justice under the law"—the extension of these rights to prohibit discrimination in all matters pertaining to public institutions, public housing, the political right of franchise, and economic and employment practices.

As has been often noted, civil liberties in the United States are both substantive, as in the case of freedom of the press, and procedural as in the assurance of "a redress of grievances." It is significant that each of the state constitutions has from the outset sought to affirm guarantees of civil liberties. The first ten amendments to the United States Constitution represent the American Bill of Rights. Following the Civil War, the Thirteenth (1865) and the Fourteenth (1868) Amendments, both guarantees of civil rights, were ratified. While the first ten amendments limited the power of the federal government, the

Fourteenth Amendment restricted any state from the abridgment of civil liberties. The Fourteenth Amendment reads: "No *State* shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." Thus the Fourteenth Amendment, building upon the civil liberties of the first ten amendments, guarantees "equal protection of the laws" for all people and prohibits the circumvention of these liberties by the states.

Civil liberties have no real meaning apart from individual and minority rights, which can be guaranteed only in the free society. The totalitarian state allows and demands consent only, while the free society guarantees and requires the right of dissent as well as the voluntary consent of the governed. In this regard, it is necessary to realize that minority rights are necessary not only to sustain the principle of freedom, but also to maintain a democratic form of government. Without guaranteed civil liberties there could be actually no democratic rule, even of the majority. At the same time the freedom of the majority must never be allowed to destroy the freedom of the minority, without whom a society cannot remain free. "The worth of a State" wrote John Stuart Mill, ". . . is the worth of the individuals composing it . . . a State which dwarfs its men, in order that they may be more docile instruments in its hands even for beneficial purposes—will find that with small men no great things can really be accomplished."¹⁹

As recognized by the courts, both state and federal, constitutional limitations exist for the protection of minorities not majorities, who are generally regarded as able to protect themselves. Even democracy needs to be limited and this limitation of the sovereignty of the people is primarily maintained through the courts. Former Justice Felix Frankfurter expressed it this way: "Judicial review is a deliberate check upon democracy through an organ of government not subject to popular control."²⁰ Liberty, whether civil or religious, is freedom from the tyranny or the control of the state, the guaranteed right of dissent, and the freedom to obey one's own conscience in so far as it does not infringe upon the rights of others or threaten the stability of the social order. In religious matters, freedom of religious belief is absolute, although religious practice is subject to the basic laws of the state.

The foregoing discussion of the free exercise of religion is particularly germane to the problem of church and state today.

Certainly the totalitarian state is always a serious threat to the church and the cause of religion. However, an altogether new phenomenon has emerged in the modern totalitarian states which have sworn hostility toward all religion. As indicated earlier, this situation is further compounded by a state absolutism which denies the right of dissent and at the same time demands supreme allegiance in all areas of life.

In addition, religious liberty historically has been integrally related to majority and minority group relations. Toleration in religion has never come easy among the major faiths of mankind. Religious majorities find it most difficult to grant full freedom to religious dissenters or minorities. Pluralism, although descriptive constitutionally and sociologically of American culture, is not by any means an accepted fact among all religious groups in the United States. Inherent in the present tensions between church and state in the United States today is the avowed purpose and felt-need of many to commit this nation to the faith of the "majority" and the "founding fathers." Actually, there is no religious majority in this country, and no reasonably uniform religious faith of the founding fathers is discernable from history. Certainly many of the founding fathers' religious beliefs would not meet the theological requirements of Christianity. Meanwhile, there are those who continue to maintain, as in the present controversy surrounding religion in the public schools, that the constitutional guarantees of religious freedom really apply only to Christianity, and that disestablishment in the United States means only non-preferential treatment of the various Christian denominations and sects. This is to misunderstand the nature of the free society, which requires a state to be uncommitted in matters of faith and religion, and at the same time is, in effect, a denial of the principle of religious liberty. Non-preferential treatment of religion can never be equated with the principle of religious liberty. Generally behind such thinking is the presupposition that majority might should prevail over minority right—that a tyranny of the majority is historically and constitutionally justified. To suggest, for example, that in the question of religion in the public schools, as in all other church-state matters, religious exercises should be permitted because we are predominantly a religious people is to ignore both the nature of our free society as a secular state and the rights of minorities who do not share my commitment to the Judeo-Christian faith. In recent years voices have been heard expressing the danger of the "tyranny of the minority" and the extreme danger of individual rights being carried too far. To

be sure, there is such a danger in the free society, but the point is that a tyranny of the majority is no less in conflict with the free society than a tyranny of the minority. What is more, the former nearly always tends to be the greater danger in a democratic state. Tyranny is tyranny, whether of the majority or the minority, and tyranny is the grave of freedom.

III

Happily, there has been increasingly, though erratic, recognition accorded the principle of religious liberty in the modern world, which has accompanied the growth of the free church and the free society. While there is overwhelming evidence to indicate that religious liberty is far from being a reality in much of today's world, and perhaps nowhere fully realized, yet the principle of religious liberty has increasingly become one of those axiomatic commitments that is almost universally recognized. Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations has given expression to the wide acceptance of the principle of religious liberty. It reads: "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others, and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance."²¹

The goal of the First Amendment is a free church and a free society. It is not an end in itself, but rather represents a constitutional means of assuring both the freedom of the church and the freedom of the state, and the independence of both. To many, the separation principle embodied in the First Amendment remains a negative and sterile concept, to be likened more to the image of a Berlin Wall than to the democratic society, which, it is said, must recognize the rights of religious majorities and the honored national traditions rooted in religious symbolism. But to understand the American tradition of church and state in historical perspective is to discern the concern for religious liberty through the free church and the free society. Writing more than a century ago, Alexis de Tocqueville observed the unity of the free church, the free society, and the separation of church and state.

On my arrival in the United States the religious aspect of the country was the first thing that struck my attention; and the longer I stayed there, the more I perceived the great political consequences resulting from this new state of things. In France I had almost always seen the spirit of religion and the spirit of freedom marching

in opposite directions. But in America I found they were intimately united and that they reigned in common over the same country. My desire to discover the causes of this phenomenon increased from day to day. In order to satisfy it I questioned the members of all the different sects; I sought especially the society of the clergy, who are the depositories of the different creeds and are especially interested in their duration. As a member of the Roman Catholic Church, I was more particularly brought into contact with several of its priests, with whom I became intimately acquainted. To each of these men I expressed my astonishment and explained my doubts. I found that they differed upon matters of detail alone, and that they all attributed the peaceful dominion of religion in their country mainly to the separation of church and state.²²

Like all phrases applied to dynamic principles in history, the phrase "separation of church and state" is not entirely satisfying. The phrase has meant, and does mean, far more than the sum total of its parts. While, to be sure, religious liberty is not something which the state can confer upon the church, but which ultimately can only be exercised by the church, the goal of the separation principle, as enunciated in the First Amendment, must be nothing less than the constitutional guarantee of full religious liberty, both freedom of religion and freedom from religion. Church-state separation provides for the mutual independence of both the church and the state, in which the state is free of control by the church and the church is free of control by the state. Church-state separation has not meant, at least historically, the separation of religion and politics nor the separation of the church and politics. It does not mean the separation of religion and the state. It does mean the separation of the direct and official function of the church from the direct and official function of state. There can be little question, from an historical point of view, but that religious liberty finds its truest expression where the state is not legally dependent upon the church in the exercise of its authority, and the church is not dependent upon the state for its sanction and support.

To suggest that the goal of church-state separation may be achieved simply so long as no one church enjoys special privileges and all denominations are treated impartially, is to fail to understand both the meaning and the significance of the secular state and the pluralistic society, and perhaps more importantly, the dependence of the church for its membership and support on a purely voluntary basis. Mere equality among the various religious communities in a given state is best described as Jurisdictionalism, and should not be referred to as church-state separation.

The principle of the separation of church and state, to the degree it serves as a guarantee for religious liberty, involves the following basic freedoms:

1. Freedom of conscience in matters of belief and worship.
2. Freedom of the church, and its institutions, from state control and/or support.
3. Freedom from privilege or discrimination among the different churches, or different religious communities.
4. Freedom from civil disability for reasons of religion or irreligion.
5. Freedom from involuntary support of religion—either by an act of worship or monetary contribution.
6. Freedom of association in which all religious organizations are recognized as private and voluntary associations.
7. Freedom of propagation of religion so long as it does not contravene the just civil laws of the state or threaten public health and order.

The real basis of the free church idea is that which asks only for the right to be free in order to *be* the church. Separation of the church from the state is necessary not only that the church be free, but that more important, it may be pure! Just as the goal of the separation of church and state is a free church, so the goal of the separation principle is a free society. The rationale of church-state separation has been, and remains, to help assure both the free church and the free society. It is toward this free society in church and state that the First Amendment needs to be applied, and it is in this context it needs to be understood.

FOOTNOTES

¹ *Miami Military Institute v. Leff*, 129 Misc. 481, 220 N.Y.S. 799, 810.

² David Dudley Field, "American Progress," *Jurisprudence* (New York: Martin B. Brown, 1893), p. 6.

³ Cf. Leo Pfeffer, "Freedom and Separation: America's Contribution to Civilization," *Journal of Church and State* 2 (November 1960): 100-111.

⁴ Quoted in William Lee Miller, "Religion and the American Way of Life," *Religion and the Free Society* (New York: The Fund for the Republic, 1958) p. 18.

⁵ Roger Williams, *The Bloody Tenent, of Persecution for cause of Conscience, discussed, in A Conference between Truth and Peace* (1644).

⁶ Isaac Backus, *A History of New England with Particular Reference to the Denomination of Christians Called Baptists* (Newton, Mass.: Backus Historical Society, 1871), II, 2-3.

⁷ Cf. William G. McLoughlin, ed., *Isaac Backus on Church, State, and Calvinism: Pamphlets, 1754-1789* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 318.

⁸ Alvah Hovey, *A Memoir of the Life and Times of the Reverend Isaac Backus* (Boston: Gauld and Lincoln, 1858), pp. 205-206.

⁹ Anson Phelps Stokes, *Church and State in the United States*, 3 vols. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950), I:47.

¹⁰ Philip Schaff, *Church and State in the United States, or the American Idea of Religious Liberty and Its Practical Effects with Official Documents* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1888), p. 15. This volume was commissioned by the American Historical Association for commemoration of the one-hundredth anniversary of the ratification of the Constitution. It remained for a long period of time the standard work on the subject.

¹¹ Arthur Cohen, "The Problem of Pluralism," *Religion and the Free Society* (New York: The Fund for the Republic, 1958), pp. 37-38.

¹² *American Council on Education Studies: Reports of Committees and Conferences*, xi, No. 26 (Washington, D.C., April 1947), pp. 49f.

¹³ Franklin H. Littell, *From State Church to Pluralism: A Protestant Interpretation of Religion in American History* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1962), p. xx.

¹⁴ Gayraud S. Wilmore, *The Secular Relevance of the Church* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962), pp. 24-25.

¹⁵ Quoted in Stokes, *Church and State in the United States*, 2:462.

¹⁶ John Winthrop, *The History of New England from 1630 to 1649* (1853); quoted in Ernest Barker, *Church State and Society Essays* (London: Methuen & Co., 1930), p. 121.

¹⁷ Emil Brunner, *Christianity and Civilization*, 2 vols. (London: Nisbet and Co., Ltd., 1949), 2:119.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

¹⁹ John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (1859) (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1956), pp. 140-141.

²⁰ Cf. Clyde E. Jacobs, *Justice Frankfurter and Civil Liberties* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961), pp. 210-217.

²¹ Cf. James E. Wood, Jr., "Religious Liberty in Ecumenical and International Perspective," *Journal of Church and State* 10 (Autumn 1968): 421-436.

²² Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 2 vols. (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1945), 1:308.

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

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I

THE EMERGENCE of religious liberty as a valid principle, as one of those axiomatic commitments that is almost universally recognized, is surely one of the major achievements of our time. In spite of the fact that there is overwhelming evidence to indicate that religious liberty is far from being a reality in much of today's world, perhaps nowhere fully realized, religious liberty has become a normative principle for almost all nations and, conversely, the denial of religious liberty is virtually everywhere viewed as morally and legally invalid. Consequently, guarantees of religious liberty presently appear in most national constitutions throughout the world, including those governments committed to atheism or irreligion. While religious liberty can hardly be said to be descriptive of conditions as they are in many countries throughout the world today, there is profound significance to be found in that the concept of religious liberty has come almost universally to have normative value.

Despite this universal commitment to religious liberty, there is no universal consensus as to its basis, either between religion and secularism or among the great world religions themselves. Modern man while categorically advocating religious liberty has remained largely oblivious to its philosophical or religious bases, as well as its historical roots.

This almost universal commitment to religious liberty on the one hand and the lack of any universal consensus for the basis of religious liberty on the other hand points to a real danger. In the absence of any conscious philosophical or religious basis, obviously religious liberty is simply widely supported for a variety of *practical* reasons. There are those, for example, who support religious liberty solely because of expediency. This is readily understandable from the perspective of the history of religion. Whenever religion has enjoyed patronage, prestige, and power it has resisted the granting of freedom in conflict with its own teachings and truths. Religious minorities throughout history have been the natural allies of religious liberty. Unfortunately, religious minorities when transformed into religious

majorities or given political or social power generally cease to be allies of religious liberty either in principle or in practice.

It is quite possible to argue for religious liberty simply on the basis that the modern secular state views religion as a private concern of its citizens and that religion has no role to play in the public and social spheres of human society. Again, the state may also embrace the idea of religious liberty simply because it holds an apathetic view toward religion and seeks to avoid for purely political reasons any entanglement in the disagreements and dissensions between the religious communities themselves. Finally, religious liberty may be viewed not as an inalienable right, but as a concession to be granted by the state only insofar as religious liberty is not in conflict with the individual citizen's national allegiance and loyalty. Thereby, religious liberty may be simply the result of the assumption of the secondary character of all religious loyalties.¹

Admittedly, the rise of the secular state and an increasingly pluralistic society within most nation states have greatly contributed to the almost universal recognition given to religious liberty; but this pragmatic basis alone, without some understanding of and commitment to the foundations of religious liberty, will not suffice to sustain the principle or to prevent religious coercion, discrimination, and/or persecution during the crisis period of a nation's history. To be secure, religious liberty must ultimately find its basis or rationale within the respective faiths or systems of thought of mankind. Although any real universal consensus as to the foundations of religious liberty would presently appear unlikely, some recognition of and dedication to some firm foundations of religious liberty are necessary if its defense is to become rooted within the value system of mankind.

II

Within the Christian tradition there have been wide and varied interpretations made of religious liberty and its theological foundations. Happily, there is emerging today for the first time in many centuries a growing consensus within the Christian world community concerning the principle of religious liberty and its theological foundations.² There is increasing recognition that religious liberty means at least this: The inherent right of a person to religious commitment according to his own conscience, in public or in private to worship or not to worship according to his own understanding or preferences, to give public witness to one's faith (including the right of

propagation), and to change one's religion—all without threat of reprisal or abridgment of his rights as a citizen.

For Christians, religious liberty is theologically rooted first of all in God's nature and in His dealings with men. Freedom for man is rooted in God. Man's very capacity for freedom is from God. To be truly free is therefore to be at one with God; for freedom is where God is present. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is present, there is freedom."³ Men reconciled to God are free men. "Freedom is what we have—Christ has set us free! Stand, then, as free men, and do not allow yourselves to become slaves again."⁴ To be sure the Christian freedom alluded to here is an inner freedom, which ultimately does not depend on social and political conditions, although this inner freedom is the basis of man's right to external freedom. But it is important for Christians that the Biblical revelation identifies God as the source of freedom and that the manner of God's dealing with men is in freedom. While religious liberty is not an explicitly revealed truth in the Bible, it has, as Amos N. Wilder has stated, "unshakable grounding" in the Scriptures.⁵ There is clearly a Biblical basis for religious freedom but in the final analysis "it is not single passages in the Bible, it is God's whole way of approaching mankind that gives us our lead."⁶

God's revelation of Himself comes to us in freedom; it is neither capricious nor coercive. Rather, an essential characteristic of the Gospel is that God has chosen to make Himself known in love and that, therefore, He does not use force to win our allegiance. "The basis of religious liberty is the very fact that Christ did not come in heavenly splendour and worldly majesty to subjugate any possible resistance and force all and everybody to subjection."⁷ The entire Biblical revelation of the New Testament breathes the spirit of freedom. Christ made Himself of no reputation and took upon Himself the form of a servant and humbled Himself even unto the death of the cross.⁸ The invitation of Christ in the Gospels is "If you want to. . . ."⁹ By its very nature this is an invitation in freedom. Neither concern for God's rightful sovereignty over men nor God's inevitable judgment on disobedient men could alter the manner of Christ's approach to mankind. "Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into his house and eat with him, and he will eat with me."¹⁰

Christian ecumenical thought, both Catholic and Protestant, has given recognition to this truth. Vatican Council II declared: "God calls men to serve Him in spirit and in truth: hence they

are bound in conscience but they stand under no compulsion. . . . This truth appears at its height in Christ Jesus, in whom God manifested Himself and His ways with men . . . His [Christ's] intention was to rouse faith in His hearers and to confirm them in faith, not to exert coercion upon them. . . . He bore witness to the truth, but He refused to impose the truth by force on those who spoke against it. . . ."¹¹ The World Council of Churches in New Delhi affirmed: "God's redemptive dealing with men is not coercive. Accordingly, human attempts by legal enactment or by pressure of social custom to coerce or to eliminate faith are violations of the fundamental ways of God with men. The freedom which God has given in Christ implies a free response to God's love. . . ."¹²

For faith to be faith it must be a voluntary, personal, and free act, an act born out of freedom. Faith is not faith if its voluntary character is abridged by coercion. Freedom is integrally bound up with God's revelation of Himself and in His relations with men. In God's very disclosure of Himself, freedom is a part of that revelation. God is not overpowering in His revelation to the point that man is subdued against his will. Man's very capacity to resist God's overtures of grace is in itself a profound testimony of the degree of divine respect for freedom. God does not compel faith, for faith, itself a gift of God, is by its very nature a free and voluntary act. As Augustin Leonard has stated it, "An imposed faith is a contradiction in terms . . . faith must be free if it is not to destroy itself."¹³ For the Christian, recognition of freedom in God's revelation is basic to religious liberty. "No intellectual ingenuity, no organized institution, no kind of compulsion and no power of persuasion can change the fact that God deals with men as free and responsible beings and that he expects from them an uncoerced response."¹⁴ Doubtlessly, the World Council of Churches affirmed for Christians everywhere the truth of this as follows: ". . . the revelation of God in Christ is a revelation that men are not forced to accept. He calls men to make a willing and obedient response to Him in faith, to answer with a free and confident 'yes' to the eternal action of His love in which He reveals Himself. This utterly free assent is undermined and destroyed when human coercion enters in."¹⁵

While this inner Christian freedom does not require an external civil or political freedom, civil and political freedom are desirable primarily as a means of creating that kind of environment which will allow an unhindered expression of religious faith and commitment without civil or political advantages or

disadvantages. It is this inner Christian freedom which is, in the final analysis, the Christian basis of external or social religious freedom. This external freedom is thereby the outward expression of that inner freedom with which God has set us free. The right of religious liberty, at least for the Christian, is first of all the right to give outward expression to or manifestation of the inner freedom one has found in Christ. By its very nature, external coercion in religious matters is a denial of religious liberty and thereby God's purpose for man.

Religious liberty is theologically rooted in man's nature and in his inalienable right to respond freely to God's revelation. Created in the image of God, man's likeness to the Creator consists in his freedom. In a profound sense, Soren Kierkegaard was right when he wrote, "Man is himself primarily and genuinely in his free choice."¹⁶ To be a person is to have the capacity for freedom and to exercise that freedom, and it is this capacity for freedom which distinguishes man as being in the image of God. That is to say, freedom for man is rooted in God and to be free is ultimately to be at one with God—to be at one with His love and purpose for the world. The human right to religious liberty is, therefore, first of all the right to give outward expression to or manifestation of the inner freedom one has found in God.

God-given, man's personhood is the foundation stone of man's right to religious liberty. Religious liberty, therefore, is the recognition of the *right* of the individual acting alone or in community, not a gift of the state. It is because of the potential destiny of man that the rights of men are to be regarded as inalienable and inviolate. The divinely ordered nature of man constitutes the basis for all of man's human rights and civil liberties. It is the rationale, whether acknowledged or not, for democracy and constitutional government in which the rights of man are accepted as binding. Ultimately, the basis of all human rights is the dignity and sacredness of the human person by virtue of God's creation. Religious liberty is an inherent right of man in order that he may respond to God without hindrance or coercion, and thereby experience the reconciliation which God yearns to see effected in all men. Men are to be free in matters of conscience and religion, first and foremost in order that God may be sovereign of their lives and that in turn men may freely respond to that sovereignty and bring about the ordering of their lives according to the will of God. As A. F. Carrillo de Albornoz expressed it, "Our religious freedom in human society finds its justification in our dependence on God's will."¹⁷

Religious liberty is rooted in the inviolable sacredness of the human conscience. Man has juridical rights because he possesses certain inalienable moral rights as a person. Basic to all of man's moral rights is religious liberty, without which all of man's civil rights are abridged. The truth is that religious liberty is fundamental to civil liberty. Increasing recognition in the modern world has been given to the essential role of religious freedom as being basic to all other human rights, that "religious freedom is the condition and guarantee of all true freedom."¹⁸

The former Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court and former President of the American Baptist Convention wrote, "In the forum of conscience, duty to a moral power higher than the state has always been maintained. . . . The essence of religion is belief in a relation to God involving duties superior to those arising from any human relation."¹⁹ Recognition of this moral right to religious liberty was expressed seventeen centuries earlier by Tertullian. "It is matter of both human and natural law," he said, "that every man can worship as he wishes. . . . It is not in the nature of religion to impose itself by force."²⁰ Man has a sacred obligation to obey his conscience. For "man's one and only means of learning God's will for him is the voice of his own conscience."²¹ Because freedom of conscience is essential to a man's personhood in the image of God and his way of response to God, no man should be compelled to act contrary to his conscience. To be sure, the exercise of one's conscience must be limited by the protection of other men's rights and the maintenance of a just social order. Even these limits, however, must not be imposed arbitrarily or partially, but in the spirit of equality and non-discrimination.

One of the foundation principles of religious liberty is that religion, as with God, must wait upon the voluntary responses of men. The dignity of the human person is too sacred to be violated by religious coercion and enforced conformity, which are a denial of the dignity and sacredness of human personality. God Himself has too much regard for the dignity of the human person to ignore the sacredness of man's rights. Religious liberty is thus the legal recognition on the part of the state of the sacred right of a person to decide matters of ultimate belief and commitment for himself. As Vatican Council II rightly proclaimed, "The protection and promotion of the inviolable rights of man ranks among the essential duties of government."²² And as the World Council of Churches affirmed at the time of its organization more than twenty years earlier, "The nature and destiny of man

. . . establish limits beyond which the government cannot with impunity go."²³

The foundations of religious liberty rest upon not only the sacredness of human personality and the inviolability of the human conscience, but also, paradoxically enough, upon the sinful nature of man. The dialectic of Christian anthropology is that man is created in the image of God and, at the same time, he is by nature a sinner. There can be no infallible human authority or institution, partly because of the sacred right of each man to follow the dictates of his own conscience in his quest for truth, but also because of the sinful nature to be found in all men and therefore in all institutions. No Christian and indeed no church is entitled to the claim of having attained to any final, infallible dogmas of truth. Every Christian and every church ought to be aware that any apprehension of truth is necessarily only partial because of the sinful and finite nature of man. This imperfection of man is to be understood as descriptive not only of man's moral behavior but also of his theology as well! In reviewing the Protestant Reformation, Reinhold Niebuhr observed, "The intolerance of the Reformation is the consequence of a violation of its own doctrinal position. Its doctrine of justification by faith presupposed the imperfection of the redeemed. Logically this includes the imperfection of redeemed knowledge and wisdom."²⁴ Significantly, most of the Reformed confessions acknowledge that as Christians we know "only in part," as do many of the Baptist confessions of faith. The Baptist Confession of 1646 declared, "We confess that we know but in part and that we are ignorant of many things which we desire and seek to know; and if any shall do us that friendly part to show us from the Word of God that we see not, we shall have cause to be thankful to God and to them."²⁵ Both Martin Luther and John Calvin recognized the truth of this principle. The New England Puritan John Cotton taught "that all power that is on earth be limited, church power or other."²⁶ The Protestant emphasis on justification by faith actually precludes the possibility of any claim of infallibility for one's own doctrinal formulations or one's understanding of truth. The claims of men and institutions to infallibility are to be viewed with profound skepticism. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God"²⁷ is not only descriptive of man's nature, it is also a thoroughly democratic presupposition. The sinful nature of man negates the possibility of the absolutizing of human authority, religious or political, and by limiting all human authority provides an important foundation for religious liberty.

Religious liberty is theologically rooted in the limited state in which civil authority has no jurisdiction over matters of religious belief and practice. The power of all government, indeed all human authority, is inevitably limited by the inalienable rights of man. These rights stand over against claims of omnipotence and absolutism on the part of the state which, though ordained by God, was created by man for public good. One essential duty of the state is to promote and protect the inviolable rights of man. This has been widely recognized in modern times by the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights, the World Council of Churches, the Roman Catholic Church in Vatican Council II, and the Baptist World Alliance.²⁸ By its very nature, the authority of the state is civil or human, and this authority is derived from the consent of the governed. The denial of religious liberty is beyond the rightful jurisdiction of the state if for no other reason than that it violates the fundamental rights of man. The state has no right to use political means for the promotion or the prohibition of religion. Acknowledgement of the state's limited role in religious matters is recognition of the sacredness of man's rights in religious affairs which are to be properly regarded as so sacred as to be beyond the authority and jurisdiction of civil government. This is precisely the theological basis for disestablishment and the separation of church and state, in which government is expressly prohibited from establishing or maintaining any jurisdictional power over religion. Religious liberty limits the secular power of both the church and the state, but protects the sanctity of man's conscience in matters of ultimate concern. One of the earliest Baptist leaders in colonial America, John Clarke, expressed it perceptively when he wrote, "A flourishing Civil State may stand, yea, and best be maintained . . . with a full liberty of religious concernments."²⁹

To illustrate from my own tradition, for example, Baptists have a long history of contending for the limited state in which religious liberty would be fully guaranteed by civil authority. The Baptist Confession of 1612, "Proposition and Conclusions concerning True Christian Religion," signed by dissidents who had fled the persecution of James I in England, proclaimed "that the magistrate is not by virtue of his office to meddle with religion, or matters of conscience, to force or compel men to this or that form of religion, or doctrine: but to leave the Christian religion free, to every man's conscience, and to handle only civil transgressions (Rom. xiii), injuries and wrongs of man against man, in murder, adultery, theft, etc., for Christ only is the king,

and lawgiver of the church and conscience (James iv. 12)."³⁰ This confession has been generally accepted as "perhaps the first confession of faith of modern times to demand freedom of religion and separation of church and state."³¹ In the Standard Confession of 1660, English Baptists, having affirmed their support of civil authority declared: ". . . we and all men are obliged by Gospel rules, to be subject to the higher Powers, to obey Magistrates, *Titus 3:1 and to submit to every Ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake*, as saith *Peter 2:13*. But in case the Civil Powers do, or shall at any time impose things about matters of Religion, which we through conscience to God cannot actually obey, then we . . . do hereby declare our whole, and holy intent and purpose, that . . . we will not yield, nor . . . in the least actually obey them . . . [but] suffer whatsoever shall be inflicted upon us, for our conscionable forbearance."³²

Recent ecumenical thought has also rightly acknowledged the limitation of political power as a major foundation of religious liberty. "From the Christian view the State has but limited, not unlimited, authority from God. Secular authority is not entitled to rule over man's conscience. The government concerns itself with peace and order, with economic and social welfare, but it does not rule over man's conscience."³³

The limited state is not only a derivative of the sacredness of man's rights, but also the sovereignty of God, which together "constitute an irremovable limit of the State which it cannot with impunity transgress."³⁴ The truth was expressed for Christians by Peter and John in the affirmation, "We must obey God rather than men."³⁵ God's sovereignty is man's most transcendent loyalty, which necessarily supercedes one's loyalty to human and civil authority. The limited state stands as a safeguard against an uncritical exaltation of the state, one inevitable consequence of which is the abridgment of religious liberty. The totalitarian state, which is an unlimited state, grants a qualified freedom of religion, but specifically restricts the activities and programs of the church and clergy. The limited state does not restrict religion *per se*, but, on the contrary, excludes the state's jurisdiction from religious affairs. "The sovereignty of God excludes an absolute of human power. It excludes both the absolute sovereignty of the state and the absolute sovereignty of the people. All known authority is limited by divine authority and by divine law."³⁶

H. Richard Niebuhr incisively wrote of the foundation of religious liberty in terms of the limited state. "Religious liberty

is rooted in the acknowledgment that loyalty to God is prior to every civic loyalty; that before man is a member of any political society he is a member of the universal commonwealth in which he is under obligations that take precedence over all duties to the state; and that the state must therefore acknowledge man's rights to perform such duties. Religion, so understood, lies beyond the provenance of the state not because it is private, inconsequential, or other-worldly matter but because it concerns men's allegiance to a sovereignty and a community more immediate, more inclusive, and more fateful than those of the political commonwealth. Religious freedom . . . is an acknowledgement by the state of the limitation of its sovereignty and of the relative character of the loyalty it is entitled to claim."³⁷ Religious liberty, legally guaranteed, recognizes that man has ends and loyalties beyond the jurisdiction of the state by virtue of man's sacredness as a person and his inviolable rights. The state, therefore, has no right either to intrude on God's dealings with man or to invade on the inner life of man.

III

There is not only a theological, but also an historical basis of religious liberty. While the foundations of religious liberty are properly to be seen first and foremost in terms of certain theological axioms, the basis of religious liberty in the modern world must also be seen as the consequence of the secular state, religious pluralism, and international relations and international law. The very concept of religious liberty as we know it today emerged slowly and was not realized until the modern era, although long advocated by various Christian thinkers and particularly by the free churches of the Radical Reformation.

Religious liberty is historically rooted in the emergence of the secular state. The major advances toward religious liberty came not from church confessions of faith, councils, or synods, but from constitutions, legislatures, and courts of law. The concept of religious liberty was rooted in the notion of "liberty of conscience," a phrase of modern origin which came into use after the Protestant Reformation and appeared most prominently in writings during the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. Even though the Protestant Reformation did not generally espouse the principle of religious liberty, it did represent a revolt against authority and in turn fostered the emergence of new nation-states and a new secular spirit throughout Europe and Great Britain, out of which the view of the secular state was born.

The emergence of the secular state is of major historical significance to the growth of religious liberty in the modern world. The actualization of the secular state, so directly related to religious liberty in today's world, is not without theological basis in Christian history. Earlier advocated by Marsilius of Padua and the Radical Reformer, Roger Williams, the acknowledged architect of the American tradition of the separation of church and state, sought to provide a theological basis for the secular state. Williams insisted that the authority of the state is "not religious, Christian, etc., but natural, human, [and] civil," and therefore is "improper" in proscribing conscience or religious affairs. The state can never assume the role of God who alone is Lord of conscience. "All magistrates in the world, both before the coming of Christ Jesus and since," Williams wrote, "are but derivative and agents . . . serving for the good of the whole."³⁸ Consequently, this meant for Williams that "no civil state or country can be truly called Christian, although true Christians be in it."³⁹ More than a century later, Isaac Backus, a leader of American Baptists in the eighteenth century, argued that a Christian view of government requires that a state restrict its authority and rule to the purely secular. "Now who can hear Christ declare that his kingdom is NOT OF THIS WORLD, and yet believe that this blending of the church and state together can be pleasing to him?"⁴⁰ Religious matters are to be separated from the jurisdiction of the state not because they are beneath the interests of the state, but, quite to the contrary, because they are too high and holy and thus are beyond the competence of the state. For "the free exercise of private judgment," Backus wrote, "and the inalienable rights of conscience are of too high a rank and dignity to be submitted to the decrees of council, or the imperfect laws of fallible legislators."⁴¹

The secular state is one in which the state is independent of church or ecclesiastical control and the church is independent of state or political control. In application, the secular state stands as a bulwark for religious liberty in its denial of the state's using religious means for the accomplishment of religious ends. The secular state is one in which churches are equal in the sight of the state and that no church has any advantages or disadvantages of establishment. The secular state, as such, is neither Christian, nor Hindu, nor Buddhist, nor Muslim, nor Shinto, nor religious, nor irreligious. The truly secular state is one in which the state seeks neither to promote nor to prohibit the free exercise of religion, in which neither religion nor irreligion enjoys an official status.

The emergence of the secular state has clearly aided the cause of religious liberty in the modern world, and therefore should not be viewed as an enemy of religion, but as an ally of religious liberty. The truth is that the secular state is one which the church should strongly welcome. As Gayraud S. Wilmore has incisively written, the church "has nowhere to stand except with the secular. It refuses to make an idol of religion. It makes common cause with the authentically secular without being permanently wedded to it. It believes in the secular not only as an instrument of divine providence and judgment but also a partner with the church in the work of reconciliation."⁴² Those Christians who are wary of the secular state in the modern world would do well to note that political absolutism and state deification have all too often accompanied the notion of the Christian state. Certainly history warns that the concept of the Christian state is as hazardous for true religion as for religious liberty.

Religious liberty is historically rooted in the emergence of religious nonconformity and pluralism. Aided by both secular and theological thought, liberty for truth in the Western world gradually gave way to liberty of conscience, namely the liberty to seek and respond to the truth as one apprehended it. In the absence of any objective basis for truth, mutual toleration naturally followed. Roger Williams saw the protection of this religious nonconformity and pluralism as "the will and command of God." "God requireth," Williams wrote, "not an uniformity of religion to be enacted and enforced in any civil state, which enforced uniformity sooner or later is the greatest occasion of civil war, ravishing conscience, persecution of Christ Jesus in His servants, and of the hypocrisy and destruction of millions of souls."⁴³

It is the legal recognition of the religiously pluralistic society, a phenomenon increasingly descriptive of societies throughout the world, that has provided one of the major pragmatic foundations of religious liberty in the modern world. Religious pluralism has come to be a deterrent to religious totalitarianism and to the denial of religious liberty. In the West, for example, the very disintegration of a united Christendom, or *mundus Christianus*, actually advanced the cause of religious liberty throughout the Western world. The right of Catholics and Protestants to restrict the freedom of dissenters and heretics was gradually eroded, and religious liberty as a principle came to be widely espoused, so much so that in the twentieth century there has developed a broad consensus, among both churches and states, in support of religious

liberty. Unfortunately, there are still those churches and those religions which today, in the face of the pluralistic character of today's world, are willing to espouse religious liberty as an abstract principle, but whenever and wherever possible they seek to maintain privileges for themselves. To do so, however, is to deny the character of religious pluralism, wherever legally guaranteed, and thereby to weaken one of the major foundations of religious liberty, so essential to the spirit of world community, in today's world.

Finally, religious liberty is historically rooted in international relations and international law. That is to say, historically speaking, the principle of religious liberty was greatly aided by and in large measure to the consequence of international relations that resulted from the ratification of treaties between states. "International law and religious liberty," as M. Searle Bates expressed it, "grew in intimate association."⁴⁴ In the nineteenth century, with sovereign states identified with different religious traditions, it became common in the drawing up of treaties to include provisions for the right of nationals of each contracting party in the territory of the other. Since these foreign nationals were often identifiable by both their nationality and their religion, it was inevitable that specific safeguards were provided for freedom of conscience, worship, and religious work "upon the same terms as nationals of the state of residence."⁴⁵

The Treaty of Berlin in 1878 at the close of the Russo-Turkish War, with its provisions for equal rights of religious minorities, is an excellent example of the role of international agreement for religious liberty. Other treaties of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, among many others, which provided guarantees of religious liberty were: the American Treaty with Japan in 1858, the General Act relating to African Possessions, signed at Berlin in 1885, and the Minorities Treaties of 1919-1923. More and more states throughout the world voluntarily entered into constitutional and treaty commitments to secure religious liberty for their own citizens as well as for foreign residents. Meanwhile, the great universal religions, with an increasingly wide geographical distribution of their adherents and communities, challenged those ethnic or national states which were built on the idea of a single religious tradition or a particular church. With the advance of the modern missionary movement Christian churches were formed throughout the world as voluntary associations of religious minorities. The principle of religious liberty came to be affirmed by virtually all national governments as a part of national law.

As late as World War II, however, religious liberty was not recognized as a matter of international law. A study prepared in 1942 for the Joint Committee on Religious Liberty of the International Missionary Council declared, "No writer asserts that there is a generally accepted postulate of international law that every State is under legal obligation to accord religious liberty within its jurisdiction."⁴⁶ It is of profound significance, therefore, that following the organization of the United Nations in 1945, concerted efforts were soon directed toward the formulation of a principle of religious liberty as a fundamental right to which all member nations were to subscribe and in recognition of the vital relationship of religious liberty to relations between states. One of the basic principles included in the Charter of the United Nations is that of "the dignity and equality inherent in all human beings," and that, therefore, all member nations "have pledged themselves to take joint and separate action in co-operation with the Organization to promote and encourage universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion." As Charles Habib Malik, Christian statesman and former President of the United Nations Assembly and Rapporteur of the UN Commission on Human Rights in 1948, recently wrote, "The movement for human rights which is rising to a crescendo all over the world owes much of its impetus to the original ferment supplied over the years by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights."⁴⁷

Today religious liberty has become an international necessity. The international dimension of contemporary life inevitably requires all world faiths to espouse religious liberty for all men everywhere since "an international community could not prosper without mutual civil tolerance and universal respect for men's consciences"⁴⁸ and special privileges have become a practical impossibility. "An essential element in a good international order is freedom of religion. This is an implication of the Christian faith and of the world-wide nature of Christianity. Christians, therefore, view the question of religious freedom as an international problem. They are concerned that religious freedom be everywhere secured."⁴⁹ This is the background for viewing in proper perspective the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights. The growing interrelatedness among all nations has underscored in the modern world that if peace and harmony are to be established and maintained among mankind, it is essential that guarantees of religious liberty must be constitutionally provided everywhere. Admittedly, there are those that say the

espousal of religious liberty in recent years by various Christian denominations is as expedient in the modern world as the denial of religious liberty seemed to be expedient to the churches during the Middle Ages and the Reformation period. Political patronage to the churches, it is observed, has been in steady decline during the past century and a half. Also, outside the West, Christianity is represented by scattered, Christian minorities in the midst of the great resurging traditional civilizations of the East. Even the larger established churches in the West have felt the need to express concern for the status of these Christian minorities which have emerged, particularly during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Furthermore, in much of the West the widespread defections from Christianity have caused the churches to come to be regarded as representing only small minorities in largely alien and hostile cultures.

While this practical, existential argument in support of religious liberty is irrefutable, A. F. Carrillo de Albornoz is right in affirming that "this pragmatic argument, of itself, would have no final validity if the right to religious freedom had not already been based on eternal, universal principles."⁵⁰ The practical argument for religious liberty as an international necessity becomes a valuable argument only after theological and philosophical foundations have been laid down as the basis for religious liberty. Such reasoning, in the final analysis, only underscores further the need for unqualified Christian commitment to religious liberty in principle and in practice, based upon a reaffirmation of the theological foundations of religious liberty within the context of Christian faith and witness.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Cf. H. Richard Niebuhr, *Radical Monotheism and Western Culture* (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), pp. 70-71.

² While any real commitment on the part of ecumenical Christianity, Protestant or Catholic, to the principle of religious liberty has been slow to emerge, growing recognition given to religious liberty may be seen in Declaration of Religious Liberty of Vatican Council II and the pronouncements on religious liberty made by the World Council of Churches ever since the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Amsterdam in 1948. Cf. A. F. Carrillo de Albornoz, *Religious Liberty* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1967) and James E. Wood, Jr., "Religious Liberty in Ecumenical and International Perspective," *Journal of Church and State*, X (Autumn 1968), 421-436. Since 1939, the Baptist World Alliance has repeatedly reaffirmed its commitment to the principle of religious liberty.

³ II Corinthians 3:17.

⁴ Galatians 5:1.

⁵ Amos N. Wilder, "Eleutheria in the New Testament and Religious Liberty," *The Ecumenical Review*, XIII (July 1961), 411.

⁶ Niels H. Soe, quoted in A. F. Carrillo de Albornoz, *The Basis of Religious Liberty* (New York: Association Press, 1963), p. 56.

⁷ Niels H. Soe, "The Theological Basis of Religious Liberty," *The Ecumenical Review*, XI (January 1958), 40.

⁸ Phillippians 2:7-8.

⁹ Matthew 19:21-22.

¹⁰ Revelation 3:20.

¹¹ Cf. "*De Libertate Religiosa*: A Declaration of Religious Freedom," Vatican Council II, *Journal of Church and State*, VIII (Winter 1966), 16-29.

¹² Cf. *The New Delhi Report: The Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches, 1961* (New York: Association Press), "Statement on Religious Liberty," p. 159.

¹³ Augustin Leonard, "Freedom of Faith and Civil Toleration," in *Tolerance and the Catholic* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1955), p. 113.

¹⁴ Carrillo, *The Basis of Religious Liberty*, p. 74.

¹⁵ *Evanston to New Delhi, 1954-61*. (Geneva: Report of the Central Committee at the Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches, 1961), Report on "Christian Witness, Proselytism and Religious Liberty."

¹⁶ Soren Kierkegaard, *Training in Christianity* (1850); quoted in Soe, "The Theological Basis of Religious Liberty," p. 41.

¹⁷ Carrillo, *Religious Liberty*, p. 41.

¹⁸ World Council of Churches, Central Committee, Chichester, 1949; quoted in Carrillo, *Religious Liberty*, p. 35.

¹⁹ Justice Charles Evans Hughes' dissenting opinion in *United States v. Mackintosh*, 283 U.S., October Term, 1930.

²⁰ Quoted in Joseph Lecler, S.J., "Religious Freedom: An Historical Survey," in *Religious Freedom*, edited by Neophytos Edelby and Teodoro Jimenez-Urresti. *Concilium* (New York: Paulist Press, 1966), p. 5.

²¹ Albert Hartmann, *Toleranz und Christlicher Glaube* (Frankfurt-am-Main: Knecht, 1955), p. 182.

²² "*De Libertate Religiosa*," *Journal of Church and State*, VIII (Winter 1966), p. 21.

²³ *The First Assembly of the World Council of Churches: Held at Amsterdam, August 22-September 4, 1948* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949), "Declaration on Religious Liberty," pp. 93-95.

²⁴ Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man: A Christian Interpretation* (2 vols.; Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941), II, 238.

²⁵ The Particular Baptist Confession of 1646 declared: "We confess that we know but in part and that we are ignorant of many things which we desire and seek to know; and if any shall do us that friendly part to show us from the Word of God that we see not, we shall have cause to be thankful to God and to them." Cf. Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, pp. 175-177.

²⁶ John Cotton, *An Exposition upon the Thirteenth Chapter of Revelation* (London: L. Chapman, 1655), p. 72.

²⁷ Romans 3:23.

²⁸ Cf. Wood, "Religious Liberty in Ecumenical and International Perspective," pp. 424-436.

²⁹ *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations*; quoted in Anson Phelps Stokes, *Church and State in the United States* (3 vols.; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950), III, 205.

³⁰ William L. Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith* (Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1959), p. 140.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 134.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 233.

³³ Carrillo, *The Basis of Religious Liberty*, p. 84.

³⁴ *The First Assembly of the World Council of Churches: Held at Amsterdam, 1948*, "Declaration on Religious Liberty," p. 93.

³⁵ Acts 4:19; 5:29.

³⁶ Emil Brunner, *Christianity and Civilisation* (2 vols.; London: Nisbet and Co., Ltd., 1948), II, 17.

³⁷ Niebuhr, *Radical Monotheism and Western Culture*, pp. 70-71.

³⁸ *The Bloody Tenent, of Persecution for cause of Conscience, discussed, in A Conference between Truth and Peace* (1644).

³⁹ Quoted in James Ernest, *Roger Williams: New England Firebrand* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1932), p. 429.

⁴⁰ Cf. William G. McLoughlin, ed., *Isaac Backus on Church, State and Calvinism: Pamphlets, 1754-1789* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 318.

⁴¹ *Alvah Hovey, A Memoir of the Life and Times of the Reverend Isaac Backus* (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1858), pp. 205-206.

⁴² Gayraud S. Wilmore, *The Secular Relevance of the Church* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), pp. 24-25.

⁴³ Roger Williams, *The Bloody Tenent of Persecution*. . .

⁴⁴ M. Searle Bates, *Religious Liberty: An Inquiry* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1945), p. 476. From his study, Bates observed, "A review of the forty-seven writers of the more important general treaties on international law, following the time of Grotius, shows that fully thirty refer to religious liberty" (*ibid.*).

⁴⁵ The Treaty of Friendship, Commerce, and Navigation Between United States of America and the Republic of Liberia, Article I, *Treaty Series*, No. 956 (1940), p. 1; quoted in Bates, *Religious Liberty*, p. 486.

⁴⁶ Norman J. Padelford, "International Guarantees of Religious Liberty"; quoted in Bates, *Religious Liberty*, p. 476.

⁴⁷ O. Frederick Nolde, *Free and Equal* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1968), p. 13.

⁴⁸ Carrillo, *Religious Liberty*, p. 33.

⁴⁹ *The First Assembly of the World Council of Churches: Held at Amsterdam, 1948*, "Declaration on Religious Liberty."

⁵⁰ Carrillo, *Religious Liberty*, p. 33.

THEOCRACY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Y. DAVID KIM

"Theocracy" is defined by Webster as a "government . . . by the immediate direction or administration of God; hence, government . . . by priests or clergy as representatives of God."¹ According to this definition, any state that claims to be governed by God or gods may be called a theocracy. History has seen many such governments. This idea underlies the Papacy and the Caliphate.

The term theocracy does not occur in the Old Testament. The idea, however, of the rule of God over His people permeates through its pages. In fact, when Flavius Josephus of the first century used the term initially, he intended it to denote exclusively the form of government described in the Old Testament. Josephus said, upon the analogy of aristocracy and democracy, "Our legislator . . . ordered our government to be what I may call . . . a theocracy."²

Theocracy in Israel, as defined by Josephus, has survived all the vicissitudes of history. Accordingly, it may not be too much to say that the history of Israel is the history of theocracy. To set this out fully would be like writing the whole history of Israel. This article will confine itself to several salient points of its development within the scope of the Old Testament.

I. INAUGURATION THROUGH MOSES

It is widely accepted, through the work of Gerhard von Rad,³ that the earliest and most succinct expression of the historical memory of Israel is preserved in the Book of Deuteronomy 26:5-9. In this passage the Israelite who will eventually reach the Promised Land is commanded to present himself before the altar of God (Deut. 26:1-4) and recite the mighty acts of God in a liturgy, saying,

A wandering Aramean was my father; and he went down into Egypt and sojourned there, few in number; and there he became a nation great, mighty, and populous. And the Egyptians treated us harshly, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage. Then we cried to the Lord the God of our fathers, and the Lord heard our voice, and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression; and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great terror, with signs and wonders; and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey.

This is an affirmation of the faith that God, the Creator of the universe, the Ruler of the world, has rescued the Israelites from the Egyptian bondage, made them a nation, and has given them the Promised Land.

An equally basic element in the historical memory of Israel is the covenant, inaugurated at Mount Sinai through Moses (Neh. 9:13-15). It is the faith of Israel that the God who had delivered them from the Egyptian slavery did condescend to enter into a covenant with Israel, and promised to rule over them as their King.⁴ The notion of theocracy begins just here.

Out of grace, God offered the Decalogue as the basic condition for the covenant⁵ and the people of Israel, by accepting it, solemnly put themselves under the obligation to obey its stipulations (Ex. 19-24). Thus, the people of Israel became God's subjects, and God became their King (Pss. 44:4, 68:24).

G. E. Mendenhall has demonstrated that the Sinai covenant was of a type prevalent in the ancient Near East in the second millenium B.C., and that it was similar to the form of suzerainty treaty between the Hittite king and his vassals.⁶

According to Mendenhall, the primary purpose of the suzerainty treaty was to establish a firm relationship of mutual support between the king and the vassal. The stipulations of the covenant were, however, binding only upon the vassal who took an oath to trust in the benevolence of the king, while the king promised the protection of the vassal.

II. PRESERVATION THROUGH JUDGES

Israel, in her early days in the Promised Land, was a tribal league, a loose confederation of clans united one to another in the service of their God.⁷ The center of their life was the Ark of the Covenant which moved from place to place and finally came to rest in Shiloh (Num. 10:33-36, I Sam. 2:12-14). Here the tribesmen gathered on feast days to seek the presence of God and to renew their allegiance to Him.

The king of Israel was the Lord God (Jud. 8:23, I Sam. 8:7), and in Him all the powers of the nation, legislative, executive, judicial were united. Consequently, there was no king, nor central government, nor was there any hierarchical organization. Indeed, "in those days, there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes" (Jud. 17:6, 21:25).

As a semi-nomadic people in a new land, however, the Israelites fared a very precarious existence. They were surrounded by foes without a unifying government. The only basis of

unity among the people was their common faith in God. Hence whenever this faith slackened, their unity was loosened and inevitably invited their foe's attack.

When the people of Israel were attacked by the surrounding foes, they cried to God for help and God raised judges to cope with the situation. Judges were heroes upon whom the Spirit of God rested mightily (Jud. 3:10, 14:6). They were charismatic leaders who, under the influence of the Spirit of God, led the people to defend themselves from the attacking foes. They were agents of God's reign in Israel and preservers of theocracy in those early days (Jud. 4—5).

The authority of the judges was neither absolute over all Israel, nor was it permanent; in no case was it hereditary. Their authority rested solely in charismatic qualities that made them men of the hour. They were strictly agents of God's rule, and this is clearly expressed by Gideon, one of the judges, who refused to rule over Israel, saying, "I will not rule over you, and my son will not rule over you; the Lord will rule over you" (Jud. 8:23).

Of all the threats from outside, the most formidable was that of the Philistines. Shortly after 1,200 B.C., the Philistines, one of the number of "sea peoples"⁸ swarmed into the land and fell upon the Israelites. With their virtual monopoly of iron weapons (I Sam. 13:19-22) the Philistines began to dominate Israel piece by piece. The decisive blow came in the eleventh century B.C., when the Philistines routed Israel at the battle of Ebenezer in which Israel was cut to pieces, the Ark of the Covenant captured, the priests killed, and the sanctuary of Shiloh razed to the ground (I Sam. 4). It was the severest military defeat ever suffered by the people of Israel.⁹ It seemed clear to the people of Israel that the older order of theocracy, so long preserved by the charismatic judges, had failed.

In the face of this national crisis, the people of Israel demanded a visible king who might hold the unity and strength of the people and defend the nation effectively.

III. ADMINISTRATION THROUGH KINGS

The enigmatic behavior of Samuel, the last judge and a prophet, needs to be seen in the light of the Philistine threats. When the people demanded a king, he interpreted that the demand had been prompted by unbelief and insofar was rebellion against God. Yet he was soon enlightened to the understanding that it was not in itself at variance with the theocratic

principle. So Samuel, having obtained God's permission, anointed Saul king over Israel (I Sam. 8:4-22, 9:15—10:1).

In reality, King Saul was not very much different from the judges of the past. He, like the judges before him, was a charismatic leader upon whom the Spirit of God rushed for the defence of Israel (I Sam. 11:6-15). In this sense, he was God's son, a vicegerent of God, and an administrator of theocracy (II Sam. 7:14). Thus the sense of God's sovereign rule over Israel was not impaired by the change of national polity. Indeed, under the leadership of King Saul, Israel succeeded in breaking the Philistine hold on the central highland (I Sam. 13—14).

David, the next king, too, was a man of charisma. His brilliant exploits were evidence that the Spirit of God was upon him (I Sam. 18:6-7, II Sam. 5:1-5, 18:7). Under his able leadership the Philistines were finally subdued and never again were they a serious menace to the people of Israel (II Sam. 8:1).

When Solomon inherited the throne, however, there was a change. There was no reference to his charismatic qualities. Solomon was acclaimed a king, not because he was a man of the Spirit of God but because he was born a favored son of David (I Kings 1:5-40). The leadership of Israel which had been provided by God through the men of His Spirit was now taken up by the sons of David. Charisma had given way to dynasty. The people of God had become the kingdom of Israel, the citizens of the Davidic state.

Ideally, however, it was believed that God had made a covenant with David and his descendents, and that the Davidic kings were none other than God's earthly representatives to rule over Israel as His vicegerents (II Sam. 7:4-17). Thus once again, the theocratic principle remained unimpaired by the establishment of dynasty.

The danger in such a situation was obvious. The purposes of God on earth were erroneously equated with those of the kings. As God called the king His son (Pss. 2:7, II Sam. 7:14) and promised to make him "the highest of the kings of the earth" (Pss. 89:27), it was easy for Israel to identify the works of God with those of their king. It was against such a temptation that the prophets of God played their magnificent role in Israel.¹⁰

IV. PURIFICATION THROUGH PROPHETS

The glory of theocracy was its prophets, for the prophets were, more than any others, the true organs of theocracy and

the purifiers of it. It was they who, as the inspired spokesmen of God, denounced the false identification of the rule of God with that of the kings. Under the powerful Spirit of God they unhesitatingly proclaimed the word of God to Israel and dramatically lived out God's message for His people.¹¹ Their watchword was "Thus saith the Lord." Indeed, they kept the rule of God alive in the covenant community of Israel.

During the reign of King David, for instance, it was Gad, a prophet, who pronounced the judgment of God upon the king for taking the census (II Sam. 24:13-14). It was the prophet Nathan who called King David a murderer to his face, and made him submit to the rule of God, the King on high (II Sam. 12:1-15).

Following the death of King Solomon, the prophet Ahijah encouraged Jeroboam to rise against the house of David (I Kgs. 11:26-35). When King Rehoboam mustered his forces to quash the uprising, another prophet Shemaiah commanded the king to desist, declaring that the rebellion was God's will (I Kgs. 12:21-24). Eventually, the rebellion led to the split of the kingdom.

From the early days of its split, the Northern Kingdom of Israel tended to desist the traditional faith of Israel. In the ninth century B.C., King Ahab openly persecuted the prophets (I Kgs. 18:4, 19:14). It was at that time that the prophet Elijah waged a holy war against the king, his family, and the votaries of the pagan god, Baal.

In the following century, it was the lot of the prophets, Amos and Hosea, to proclaim an unequivocal doom over Israel. And the doom came with incredible speed, when the Assyrians overran Israel in the latter part of the eighth century B.C.

Now the hope of Israel rested with the Southern Kingdom of Judah. Yet the south too shared the sins that caused the fall of the north. The Southern Kingdom, too, would fall, declared the prophets Micah and Isaiah (Mic. 3:9-12, Isa. 5:1-7). But the doom which the prophets proclaimed upon the people did not abdicate God's rule over His people. On the contrary, the prophets insisted that the fact of judgment was the sure sign of God's rule over Israel.

Furthermore, the prophet Isaiah declared that because God ruled over Israel, after the destruction of the Kingdom of Judah, there would be a "holy seed" (Isa. 6:13), a remnant, cleansed and made amenable to God's purpose (Isa. 10:20-22, 37:30-32). Thus, the hope of God's rule began to shift from the nation to a community within the nation. A distinction began to be drawn

between physical Israel and the true Israel, the actual Israel and the ideal Israel.

The prophet Jeremiah of the sixth century B.C. continued and further developed the theme of remnant. He declared that God was executing His judgment upon Judah through the Babylonians. Therefore, he asserted, Judah should submit to the yoke of Babylon, for to rebel against it would be to rebel against God and to court certain destruction (Jer. 27:5-11).

Naturally, Jeremiah was hated by his own people and was treated as a traitor. In loneliness he turned to God for consolation, and by and by his message began to stress the inner and individual character of life. He called individual Israelites within the nation to turn to God and decide to live under His rule. Thus, in Jeremiah the notion of the remnant became highly individualized. One day, he declared, God would make a New Covenant with those who turn to Him, and He would rule over them as His own people (Jer. 31:31-34).

As prophesied by Jeremiah, the destruction of Judah became a reality by the onslaught of the Babylonians in the sixth century B.C. Thousands of Israelites perished in the struggle, a large number of leaders were deported to Babylonia, and cities of the nation were burnt to the ground. The national existence of Israel came to a tragic end.

V. REPROJECTION THROUGH APOCALYPSE

Now that history had brought the end of the nation of Israel by the hands of a pagan army, was it the end of theocracy in Israel? No, on the contrary, the end of national life was, according to Jeremiah and Ezekiel, God's due judgment upon the sinful Israel, a sign of His continuous rule (Jer. 16:10-13, Ezk. 14:12-23). It was a time for the remnant of Israel, the captives in Babylon, to live out their faith in God without the benefit of the nation and of the Temple (Jer. 29:1-9).

The number of Israelites who had been deported to Babylon was not very large (Jer. 52:28-30), but it was the cream of Israel's leadership. It was they who would shape the future of Israel. And their faith proved, as it had done so many other times, that it had the stamina to survive, the elasticity to overcome national disaster.

In Babylon, the faithful captives took care to preserve the historical records of God's work. The sayings of the prophets which had come true so powerfully over their lives, were remembered, preserved, and written down.¹² At the same time

they sought to observe and obey the detailed laws of God in earnest. Furthermore, they persisted in the hope that God would some day let them return home and carry out His purpose and fulfill their mission in the Promised Land.

This incredible hope of the captives of Israel came true, when Cyrus the Persian overthrew the Babylonians in the latter part of the sixth century B.C. Cyrus the Great, one of the great men of the ancient Near East, a man designated by a prophet as God's "shepherd" (Isa. 44:28) and "anointed" (Isa. 45:1) was a man of enlightenment. In the first year of his conquest, he decreed that the captives of Israel be freed and repatriated to Judea to rebuild their country and practise their faith (Ezra 1:1-4, 7-11, 6:3-5). In response, the enthusiastic exiles took their arduous trek home to Jerusalem. A restored community of Israel came into being in the Promised Land.

In the restored community of Israel there was no king, and the office of the high priest became most prominent (Hag. 2:2, Zech. 3:1). Under the priestly guidance the returnees sought to regulate their lives by the meticulous observances of the Law. As a whole, however, the great hope of the returnees soon encountered cruel disappointment. The community was merely a small collection of poverty-stricken people on a tiny land in the vast Persian Empire. There was hardship, privation, and insecurity in the land. The people suffered by poor seasons, crop failures and constant harrassment of their hostile neighbors (Hag. 1:9-11, 2:15-17, Neh. 4:1-15). But it was the integral part of Israel's faith that it would not give up the confidence in the ultimate victory of God for Israel.

Time passed. The ruling authorities changed hands, the Persians were replaced by the Greeks, the Greeks by the Egyptians, and the Egyptians by the Syrians. The little community of Israel eked out their existence through the vicissitudes of history, persisting in the hope that the day of redemption would soon come for Israel.

In the days of the tyrannical domination of the Syrians, in the second century B.C., the condition of the Israelites became intolerable. Under such circumstances, the frustrated hope of Israel became a desperate longing for the intervention of God on their behalf. It was in such a situation that there emerged the phenomenon known as apocalypse,¹³ which kept alive Israel's faith in the triumphant rule of God.

Apocalypse is a type of literature couched in cryptic language dealing with the end of time. By means of strange visions, mystic numbers, and figures of awesome beasts, it des-

cribed the great dreams of the end of time. It told how God would intervene on behalf of His people to wind up the affairs of the world, to judge His foes and to set up His kingdom for His people. It described the unbearable events of the present as foreshadows of the cosmic struggle between God and evil, and when it reached its climax, God would bring His Kingdom. The Book of Daniel in the Old Testament bears such witness.

Like all the hopes of Israel, the apocalypse pointed to a solution beyond itself. It reprojected the rule of God over Israel beyond the horizon of the Old Testament. In the time of great despair, it prepared the way for the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth.

And in the fulness of time, according to the Gospel of Mark, "Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel'" (Mk. 1:14-15). Furthermore it is the unanimous affirmation of the New Testament that this Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah, and that in him all the hope of Israel finds its true fulfillment. Thus, theocracy in the Old Testament reaches its climactic phase in the coming of the Kingdom of God in Jesus Christ.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Webster's *New International Dictionary* (2nd ed.; Springfield, Mass.: G. & C. Merriam Co., 1959), p. 2619.

² F. Josephus, *Against Apion* ii. 16.

³ G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, vol 1 (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd Ltd., 1962).

⁴ The Covenant idea is so important that W. Eichrodt has reconstructed the entire Old Testament theology around it. See his *Theology of the Old Testament* (tr. by J. A. Baker, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961).

⁵ H. H. Rowley, "Moses and the Decalogue," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 34 (Sept., 1951), 81-118.

⁶ G. E. Mendenhall, "Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition," *The Biblical Archaeologist*, XVII (May, 1954), 50-56.

⁷ W. F. Albright, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*, (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1942), pp. 95-110.

⁸ For historical references throughout the article consult John Bright, *A History of Israel* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964).

⁹ It was an irony of history that the Promised Land be called Palestine, a word derived from the Philistines.

¹⁰ For further information on the theme, see John Bright, *The Kingdom of God* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1953).


¹¹ For the discussion on the symbolic acts of the prophets, see B. D. Napier, "Prophet," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. 3, 916-917.

¹² For further study on the subject consult O. Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament: An Introduction* (tr. by P. R. Ackroyd, New York: Harper and Row, 1965).

¹³ For bibliography on apocalypse see H. H. Rowley, *The Relevance of Apocalyptic* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1944).



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INTRODUCTION TO THE CURRENT ISSUE

THE three articles in the current issue of *Ashland Theological Bulletin* focus on various aspects of New Testament study and New Testament times.

The first article introduces the reader to Walter Bauer, the late German scholar by whose prodigious labors we have what is short-handedly known as the Arndt and Gingrich Greek Lexicon. Dr. Flora's account helps place some matters in perspective relative to this monumental work and raises one's appreciation for Walter Bauer close to the level of awe.

The last article considers the nature of epistolary material in the New Testament era, compares N.T. epistolary literature to contemporary forms, and classifies the epistolary literature of the New Testament in light of the findings.

Bruce Manning Metzger, a name no doubt familiar to most *Bulletin* readers, is guest writer in this issue. His article is transcribed from one of four lectures in the Fall Lectures at A.T.S. titled "The Development of the Ministry and the Role of the Laity in the Early Church." Dr. Metzger describes the shape of leadership in the earliest years of the Christian church and traces the process of change that took place in the church leading to later patterns of leadership.

Owen H. Alderfer, editor

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THAT DICTIONARY MAN, WALTER BAUER

JERRY R. FLORA

Time: about fifteen years ago.

Place: the West German university town of Gottingen.

Protagonists: two internationally-known New Testament scholars, one a young American, the other an elderly German, nearly blind.

The latter, Professor Walter Bauer, commented bitterly about a new development. The monumental New Testament dictionary which he had painfully compiled, only recently translated into English, was already being called by the names of its fine American editors.¹ Bauer, fearful of being forgotten, described the lexicon as "my life. I worked on it at least five hours a day, Sundays not excepted, for forty years. And the name of my life is Walter Bauer."²

Who was this man, and why was he so intent on preserving his name? What right did he have to feel so strongly? The purpose of this article is to describe a remarkable scholar and his sacrificial gift to the world—the finest dictionary of early Christian Greek ever assembled, an indispensable tool at the elbow of every student who takes the New Testament text seriously, whether he be pastor, professor, or seminarian. No other lexicon contains the wealth of material to be found in Bauer's work.

THE LIFE AND WORK OF WALTER BAUER

Walter Felix Bauer was born August 8, 1877, in Konigsburg, the East Prussian city in which Immanuel Kant spent his life. Bauer's father was a professor in the university there, but the son took his own university training at Marburg, Berlin, and Strasbourg, which at that time was the capital of the German state of Alsace-Lorraine.³

STUDENT AND TEACHER

At Marburg Bauer studied under Adolf Julicher (1857-1938), who taught New Testament and church history, and under Johannes Weiss (1863-1914), son-in-law of Albrecht Ritschl and professor of New Testament. Wilhelm Hermann, one of the most brilliant followers of Ritschl and Harnack, was teaching theology at Marburg during Bauer's student years there, and the philosophy faculty was dominated by the neo-Kantianism of Hermann Cohen and Paul Natorp.⁴

The University of Berlin was distinguished in the nineteenth century by a galaxy of scholars such as Schleiermacher in theology; Hegel in philosophy; Niebuhr, Ranke, and Mommsen in history; Lachmann in philology; and Gunkel in Old Testament. Bauer went to Berlin in order to study under Otto Pfleiderer in New Testament and systematic theology and under Adolf von Harnack, whose encyclopedic magnetism attracted pupils there from 1888 to 1921. His career almost covered the period of Berlin's ascendancy in theology from 1871 to 1918.⁵

At Strasbourg the outstanding teachers for young Bauer were Emil Noldeke, an expert in Semitic and Syriac studies, H. J. Holtzmann (1832-1910). Along with Harnack, Holtzmann marked Germany's supremacy in the historical study of early Christianity between 1860 and 1900.⁶

Following his university training Bauer began at once to teach, first at Marburg and Breslau from 1903 to 1916,⁷ then from 1916 to 1945 at the University of Gottingen.⁸ He also began at once to publish, most of the publications during his long career being books, contributions in collective works, and reviews.⁹ His doctoral dissertation appeared in 1902, followed in quick succession by works on Syrian Christianity, the Johannine corpus, the New Testament apocrypha, the catholic epistles, New Testament theology, the Fourth Gospel, and nearly twenty major book reviews—all within the first decade of his professional experience.

Bauer was thirty-nine years old when he was called to Gottingen in 1916. For nearly three decades he taught in the home of the history of religions school until failing eyesight forced him to retire at the close of 1945. In retirement his eyes improved until he could read with the aid of a magnifying glass. He continued to pursue his research with diligence until he died on November 17, 1960, at the age of eighty-three. Following his death *New Testament Studies* paid special tribute to his labor, singling out for note his achievements as lexicographer, com-

mentator, and historian of the early church.¹⁰ Such recognition has not been accorded any other New Testament student of the last generation.

THE BIG DICTIONARY

Bauer's best-known work at Gottingen was the lexicon by which he made it possible for the Greek of the early Christian literature to be more thoroughly known than that of any other segment in the spectrum of Greek literature.¹¹ His dictionary began as a revised second edition of the earlier manual lexicon by Erwin Preuschen, who died in 1920. Bauer did not feel particularly drawn to this kind of work, either by previous study or personal inclination;¹² however, in his university preparation he had studied both classical and Near Eastern philology. By the time the dictionary's fifth edition was completely published in 1958 one conclusion had become obvious: Walter Bauer was the greatest lexicographer in the history of the study of early Christian literature, both canonical and extra-canonical.

The magnitude of Bauer's achievement may be more easily apprehended if the following factors are considered: (1) During his Gottingen career Bauer produced numerous other publications, some of them major works, in his roles as author and editor. A few of these will be noted later. (2) Much of the lexicon was compiled during the National Socialist years of power and during World War II, although the doughty Prussian refused to bow to the Nazi regime.¹³ (3) The postwar editions were completed with great difficulty while the author, the publishing firm, and the printers were in three separate occupation zones in Germany. (4) The fourth and fifth editions (1952, 1958) were produced in spite of eye affliction and magnifying glass. (5) Even before the third edition (1937) Bauer had begun to search for parallels to early Christian use of Greek by systematically reading every Greek author between the fourth century B.C. and the Byzantine period. (6) By his own accounting, as mentioned at the outset, he worked on the lexicon at least five hours a day, seven days a week, for forty years. Therefore, it becomes more understandable why the aged scholar was embittered that the English version of his life-work so quickly became known by the names of its American translator-editors.

During the four decades in which Bauer toiled at lexicography he also produced a large number of significant other works, although only a few can be singled out for notice here.¹⁴ His commentary on the Fourth Gospel, which went through three editions, drew from Bauer's prior study of the Mandaean

materials, the Odes of Solomon, and the letters of Ignatius. It was Bauer's conclusion that the Fourth Gospel, in light of these other literatures, must have originated in Syria in gnosticizing circles on the edge of Judaism.¹⁵

He was also a frequent reviewer for scholarly journals, averaging five major reviews per year for forty-eight years in the monthly *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, which he edited from 1930 to 1939. In addition, along with his colleague Joachim Jeremias, who joined him at Gottingen in 1935, Bauer was co-editor of the prestigious *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* from 1949 until his death. He was also asked to contribute to such important works as all three editions of the German encyclopedia of religion in past and present (*Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*: twenty-five articles in the second edition, most of them on early Christian apocrypha) and what is now the standard Hennecke-Schneemelcher-Wilson edition of *New Testament Apocrypha*. The impression begins to emerge that the biographical description was justified which said, "Specialization: free investigation in the history of religion."¹⁶

Although Bauer was a mature scholar in his own right when he went to Gottingen, he must have been acutely aware that he was going to the university where both Ritschlian liberalism in theology and the history of religions school of research had their homes. There as an independent investigator he sought to find his own path between traditional supernaturalism and radical environmentalism in understanding the origins of Christianity, how it became catholic, and how catholicism became Roman. He demonstrated his originality and independence in *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*.

THE IMPORTANCE OF 1934

This book, only recently translated into English,¹⁷ has already influenced a generation of German study on the early church. As a piece of historical explanation, the theory Bauer proposed in *Orthodoxy and Heresy* was the antithesis of the traditional view posited by the early church Fathers. In place of a straight line of theology transmitted from Jesus to the apostles, Bauer saw a widespread diversity of views in the primitive church. Instead of an original orthodoxy being perverted by later heresies, he saw "heresy" as the earliest form of Christianity in most regions of the Roman Empire, with "orthodoxy" coming later as a secondary development. Where the Fathers saw western Christendom heading up in Rome because that was

the church where both Peter and Paul had labored and to which the central apostolic traditions had flowed, Bauer viewed the Roman church as a shrewd, disciplined community which, by means of power politics, imposed its will on the rest of the churches. In short, he interpreted the situation of Christianity ca. A.D. 50-200 as one of widespread diversity in which "heretical" forms of doctrine came early, but "orthodoxy" emerged comparatively late with Rome the key to its ultimate triumph.

The significance of Bauer's work has been slow in winning recognition outside the sphere of influence dominated by Rudolf Bultmann. Both scholars emerged in the same context, studied under the same professors, and began their teaching careers at the same universities. However, while the investigation of orthodoxy and heresy was a strictly historical study for Bauer, Bultmann went a step further when he suggested that the beginnings of early Christian theology might be found here. The post-Bultmannians have now followed up Bauer's work, making the orthodoxy-heresy question a central problem in contemporary New Testament interpretation.¹⁸

When Bauer's book was published in 1934, he was fifty-seven years old, an internationally recognized scholar at the peak of his career. For a decade and a half he had been full professor in the Gottingen chair distinguished earlier by Wilhelm Bousset, and since 1930 he had edited the German monthly review of theological literature, *Theologische Literaturzeitung*. He was acknowledged as an expert lexicographer, biblical exegete, and historian of the early church.

THE COMPLETE SCHOLAR

Bauer had issued a revised edition of Preuschen's manual lexicon in 1928 and was working in 1934 on a further revision so extensive that his name alone would appear on the title page. "Bauer" was becoming synonymous with lexicography.

At the same time he was Germany's outstanding interpreter of the Fourth Gospel, his commentary on John having recently appeared in its third edition. As an exegete Bauer was chiefly interested in such matters as philological analysis, literary source criticism, and historical influences in the writer's environment—anything that might contribute to elucidating what the document signified in its original setting. He was a friend of the younger Bultmann, but he shared none of the latter's concern about interpretation for twentieth-century man. Bauer saw his task as solely that of explaining "what it meant"; when that

was accomplished, he was content to hand over his work to the theologians and homileticians for their decisions on "what it means."¹⁹ He was a specialist and would not trespass outside his area of expertise.

Bauer was also an acknowledged authority in early church history. From the beginning of his scholarly career in 1902 he had investigated the primitive church and its development. His large work on Jesus in the New Testament apocrypha, published when he was thirty-two, was considered so significant by a later generation that it was reprinted nearly sixty years later.²⁰ He had demonstrated early interest and competence in studying the church of Syria and was sought out as an expert on matters pertaining to early rabbinic and Christian literature.²¹ The 1934 publication of his *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* climaxed thirty years of church historical investigation.

Bauer continued to pursue his research in the lexicography of the New Testament and the other literature of the early Christians, finding here a field virtually unexplored in any scientific way. Therefore, as already noted, he announced his intention in the mid-thirties to search for parallels to early Christian language by systematically reading every Greek author between the fourth century B.C. and the Byzantine period.²² However, freedom for that kind of research demanded that something else be eliminated.

AT GREAT COST

It would appear that around 1934 Professor Bauer decided to sacrifice his work in biblical exegesis and early church history in order to devote himself wholly to lexicography. There were other scholars, competent investigators, working in the first two areas, but no other name was on the horizon in the third field.

Therefore, in 1933 Bauer published the third edition of his commentary on John; after that he offered no other major contributions to New Testament exegesis. Several of his views were picked up and employed by Rudolf Bultmann in his great commentary which began to appear in 1941,²³ and Bauer seemed content to let his exegetical work continue in that manner.

He climaxed his previous studies on the history of the primitive church with the 1934 appearance of *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*. In the same year he offered a precis of that work in article form, but he let the matter drop there. His new theory, at first virtually unnoticed, would have received more attention if he had continued to refer to it in later writings. He did comment privately that he regretted it had generated so

little interest,²⁴ but he never returned to it in print although he actively engaged in research for another twenty-six years.

That quarter-century would be devoted solely to the project of the lexicon, which he published in ever-enlarging editions (1937; 1952, from which the English version was made; and 1958). Through the war years, the period of reconstruction, and his near-blindness Bauer toiled on to produce a finely honed tool for all who take the New Testament text seriously. He apparently closed the door on his work as commentator and historian about 1934 in order to spend the rest of his days searching through a thousand years of Greek literature in order to illuminate the early church's language.

His scholarly career spanned nearly six decades, the first half of which (1902-ca. 1934) was devoted to study and writing in several areas, the latter half (ca. 1934-1960) being concentrated on just one project. The publication of his theory on early Christian orthodoxy and heresy represented the mid-point of his life-work, but it was the end of his career as a historian and exegete. Much was lost to scholarship by this sacrifice. Yet, who would protest that the monumental dictionary which he produced did not justify his decision?²⁵

FOOTNOTES

¹ The title page reads as follows: "*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, by William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich. A translation and adaption of Walter Bauer's *Griechisch-Deutsches Worterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der ubrigen urchristlichen Literatur*, Fourth Revised and Augmented Edition, 1952. Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press."

² James M. Robinson, "Basic Shifts in German Theology," *Interpretation*, XVI (1962), 76.

³ Founded in 1527, Marburg was the first university to be established without papal privileges. In 1905 it had 1,576 students and a library of 140,000 volumes (*The Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th ed., XVII, 680). The Friedrich Wilhelm University of Berlin, begun only in 1810, enrolled 5,488 students in the summer term and 7,154 in the winter of 1904-1905 (*ibid.*, III, 787). Strasbourg in the same period, with an enrollment of about 1,400, boasted a library of more than 800,000 volumes (*ibid.*, XXV, 984).

⁴ Winfried Zeller, "Marburg, Universitat," *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 3rd ed., IV (Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1960), 735. By their "scientific" orientation Cohen and Natorp intended to be anti-speculative. For them, philosophy meant the theory of the principles of science and therewith of all culture (L. W. Beck, "Neo-Kantianism," *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (New York: The Macmillan Company and The Free Press, 1967), V, 470).

⁵ Karl Kupisch, "Berlin, Universität," *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 3rd ed., I (Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1957), 1058. At almost the same time as Bauer, Rudolf Bultmann (born seven years later in 1884) was taking his university training at Tubingen, Berlin, and Marburg, receiving his doctorate from Marburg in 1910. He names Gunkel, Harnack, Julicher, Weiss, and Hermann as all decisive influences in his preparation (Rudolf Bultmann, *Existence and Faith: Shorter Writings of Rudolf Bultmann* (New York: Meridian Books, 1960), pp. 283f.; C. W. Kegley, ed., *The Theology of Rudolf Bultmann* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1966), pp. xix-xx).

⁶ Luigi Salvatorelli, "From Locke to Reitzenstein: The Historical Investigation of the Origins of Christianity," *Harvard Theological Review*, XXII (1929), 308.

⁷ Bultmann taught at Marburg from 1912 until 1916 when he accepted a call to Breslau, apparently to succeed Bauer. It was at Breslau that Bultmann wrote his *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, which appeared in 1921, the year he returned to Marburg after one year at Giessen. He had moved to Giessen in 1920 as successor to Bousset, who had gone there in 1916 from Gottingen (Bultmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 284f.; Kegley, *op. cit.*, pp. xx-xxi).

⁸ The standard reference sources contain a problem in the dates of Bauer's early teaching career. *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 2nd ed., I, 798, places him at Marburg from 1903 to 1913 and at Breslau, 1913-1916; however, the third edition, I, 925, places him at Marburg in 1903 and at Breslau from 1903 to 1915. W. G. Kummel, who wrote the latter entry, agrees with the dating of the former reference in his *Das Neue Testament: Geschichte der Erforschung seiner Probleme*, 2nd ed. (Freiburg: Verlag Karl Alber, 1970), p. 574. The problem may be typographical rather than editorial.

⁹ Cf. Claus-Hunno Hunzinger, "Bibliographie Walter Bauer," *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, LXXVII (1952), 501-504; "Nachtrag zur Bibliographie Walter Bauer," *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, LXXXVI (1961), 315f.

¹⁰ Cf. *New Testament Studies*, IX (1962-1963), which, in addition to a portrait and biographical note (pp. 1f.), published the following assessments: F. W. Gingrich, "The Contributions of Professor Walter Bauer to New Testament Lexicography," pp. 3-10; Wilhelm Schneemelcher, "Walter Bauer als Kirchenhistoriker," pp. 11-22; Erich Fascher, "Walter Bauer als Kommentator," pp. 23-38.

¹¹ Gingrich, *op. cit.*, p. 10. (The article was apparently a revision of a paper originally read at the 1952 meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature; cf. the note in *Journal of Biblical Literature*, XXII (1953), xix-xx.)

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹³ For the situation of Gottingen's theological faculty as one of the ten close to the Confessing Church, see John S. Conway, *The Nazi Persecution of the Churches, 1933-45* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1968), pp. 191-195.

¹⁴ For details, see Hunzinger, *loc. cit.*

¹⁵ Walter Bauer, *Das Johannesevangelium*, 3rd ed. (Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1933), pp. 241-244; cf. Fascher, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-35.

¹⁶ "Walter Bauer," *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 2nd ed., I (Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1927), 798.

¹⁷ Walter Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*. Trans. by a team from the Philadelphia Seminar on Christian Origins. Ed. by Robert A. Kraft and Gerhard Krodel (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971).

¹⁸ Cf. Jerry R. Flora, "A Critical Analysis of Walter Bauer's Theory of Early Christian Orthodoxy and Heresy" (Th. D. dissertation, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1972), from which the material for this article was drawn.)

¹⁹ Fascher, *op. cit.*, pp. 31f. For the relationship between "what it meant" and "what it means" as the crux of hermeneutics, see Krister Sten-dahl, "Biblical Theology, Contemporary," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), I, 418-432, especially pp. 425-431 on "The Hermeneutic Question."

²⁰ Walter Bauer, *Das Leben Jesu im Zeitalter der Neutestamentlichen Apokryphen* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1967 reprint of the original 1909 edition).

²¹ For details, see Hunzinger, *loc. cit.*

²² Gingrich, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

²³ Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* Trans. by G. R. Beasley-Murray, R. W. N. Hoare, and J. K. Riches (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1971).

²⁴ Fascher, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

²⁵ The University of Chicago Press in recent printings of the lexicon has added Professor Bauer's name to those of the translator-editors on the cover of the volume. Thus, Bauer's life-work in its English dress can readily be cited as Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL ORGANIZATION IN THE EARLY CHURCH

BRUCE M. METZGER

HISTORICAL evidence shows that the early church underwent a gradual development, so that what originally was one people of God eventually became a hierarchial organization. At first the whole church, taking over the terminology of the Old Testament, called itself the *laos tou theou*, the people of God. In the course of time we discover that the adjective *laicos* came to designate those members of the church that we would call today the laity, those members who had not received ordination. Thus there developed a great divide between the clergy on the one hand and the laity on the other. Solemn ordination or consecration by the laying on of hands was the form of admission into the several orders. These developed further into the greater orders—the diaconate, the presbyterate, the episcopate—which were held to be of divine institution. Under these greater orders were the minor orders of a later date, ranging from that of the subdeacon to the following: the lectors in charge of reading the scriptures in the assembly and of taking care of the church books; the acolytes, who were followers of the bishops in their official duties and processions, who carried the bread and the water and lit the candles; the exorcists, who by prayer and the laying on of hands cast out the evil spirits from the catechumens and frequently assisted in the ritual of baptism; the precentors or cantors, who took charge of the musical parts of the liturgy, singing of the psalms, the benedictions, the responses, etc.; the sextons, who took care of the religious meeting rooms and at a later period had charge also of the church grounds; and a variety of other suborders.

Such are the chief external changes in the growth or organization. It is necessary to consider some of the inner motives and inner forces that led to so great a differentiation within the one people of God, producing these several ranks and levels of clergy and their assistants. As might be expected,

scholars are not in agreement concerning the identification of these inner forces and motives that led to the growth of the ministry. In fact, very basic differences exist as to the nature of the church itself. On the one hand, some have held—particularly persons concerned chiefly with studying the individual and his religious psychology—that the primitive church and its organization involved nothing more than a group of believers united by external circumstances. They assume that the following is the order of priority: that the individual existed before the local congregation and that the local congregation existed before the universal church. They assume also that ecclesiastical officers and ministries were regarded purely as peripheral to Christianity—that they were concerned solely with administrative duties and the maintenance of order. Some of these people think that the spirit and the enthusiasm working in the earliest phase of the church did not fundamentally need any form or definite channel. The theory is that the inward spontaneity gradually yielded to the necessity of having a cohesive and regulative organization which was primarily administrative or juridical in nature, and this gave it something of a secular stance. Regular meetings and the practical needs of community life called for the institution of certain offices. It was only when the anticipated return of Christ did not happen and the church began to establish itself in the world that the ordained ministers began to be accepted as something essential to the life of the church. The result, so it is held, was a wide variety in the organization in the church based solely on considerations of practical expediency.

Doubtless there are some features of this picture that are valid, but there are other elements that need to be re-evaluated. For one thing, the key to the origin and nature of the church has been found to lie in Christ's own awareness that He was the Messiah, the Son of Man coming to gather and redeem the people of God. Around Him and among those whom He called to follow Him the kingdom of God took shape. There is reason to believe that Christ did not base His entire teaching on the supposition of the immediate *parousia* or the end of the age. There are sayings of His which imply an interval between His death and His return on the Day of Judgment. For example, the parable of the wheat and the tares certainly suggests a rather extended period of maturation of both the good and the evil prior to the Day of Judgment. Furthermore, the institution of the Lord's Supper is one of those signs that shows that Christ expected the new way of life to be embodied in and about His person and that this should continue during the interim period.

The church, then, is part of our Lord's deliberate purpose. It is not a "happenstance." It contains and continues an eschatological community of those whom Christ gathered about Himself during His life on earth. Therefore, the church created by Christ Himself is universal, yet appearing in the world in visible form, and is prior to its manifestation in local congregations. In other words, we may make the following points: First, the concept of "church" belongs primarily to a religious and not merely to a sociological or institutional dimension. As the body of Christ and as the Messianic bride invited to participate in the gifts of the Kingdom, the church is not merely a fellowship of persons of good will, a purely voluntary association, a social club. Second, the church is represented in the New Testament as a living organism whose unity arises from its relation to one God and one Lord Jesus Christ (*e.g.* Eph. 4:1-6). The church is not the property of the believers nor do the expressions, "My church," or, "Our church," reflect the New Testament emphasis upon the divine origin of the church as the *ecclesia* of God. Its members are knit together by a deeper than merely sociological kinship, and all their talents and services are regarded as a continuation of the life and activity of Christ Himself. For even after His resurrection Christ still works among mankind and offers them a way to salvation from and through their earthly conditions. Third, in the church human divisions and distinctions disappear (*e.g.* Gal. 3:28). ". . . there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond or free, male or female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (*cf.* Col. 3:11). Although local communities of believers were under the guidance of apostles, teachers, or bishops and other leaders, the church as a whole is described as "a brotherhood" (I Peter 2:17; 5:9) in which nothing is known of sacerdotal grace or of an institutional hierarchy that separates laymen from clergy. All who belong to Christ are equipped for work in His service (Ephesians 4:12). This is strikingly stated in the words of Father Hans Kung in his provocative book entitled, *The Church*: "The priesthood of all believers consists in the calling of the faithful to witness to God and his will before the world and to offer up their lives in the service of the world. It is God who creates this priesthood and hence creates fellowship among believers." He continues, "The priesthood of all believers is the fellowship in which each Christian, instead of living to himself, lives before God for others and is in turn supported by others. 'Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ' Gal. 6:2." (p. 381).

History leaves no record of any distinctively set-apart

church buildings in the first and second centuries. The first sanctuary of which we have knowledge dates from towards the end of the second century or the beginning of the third. The assemblies of the Christian believers prior to this time met in house-churches. It is appropriate to ask how the early house-churches contributed to the experience of this fellowship among the individual Christian believers. New Testament accounts give us clues; for example, prayer was held in the home of Mary, the mother of John Mark, in Jerusalem (Acts 12:12). There is the implication that this was not a meeting place of the whole church in Jerusalem but of only one group within the city. As the number of Christians increased in Jerusalem it would become increasingly difficult for all the believers to meet in one house. For all ordinary occasions, at least, the total body was split into smaller groups which could be accommodated in private homes. As Christianity spread the same development would occur in other cities. When the synagogue was closed to Christian preachers—and this seems to have occurred early in the development of Paul's work in the cities that he visited—then the house-church dominated the situation. Only rarely could a public assembly hall be obtained. We read of at least one such occasion in Acts 19:9 when the lecture hall of Tyrannus was engaged in the city of Ephesus. Therefore, if a locality other than the market-place was to be had it would have to be in the home of believers. Priscilla and Aquila made their home a center of Christian fellowship and teaching (I Cor. 16:19; Rom. 16:5). In the city of Laodicea a Christian woman named Nymphas was hostess to a group of believers (Col. 4:15). In the city of Colosse Philemon made available his home as a center for a band of disciples (Phil. 2).

It is necessary to investigate what were some of the benefits as well as some of the limitations that were characteristic of these early house-churches where the fellowship of the believers took place. First, the house-church enabled followers of Jesus to have a distinctively Christian worship and fellowship from the very first days of the Apostolic Age. It was the hospitality of these homes which made possible Christian worship—the common meals and the courage-sustaining fellowship of the group. Second, the large part played by the house-churches affords a partial explanation for the great attention paid to family life in the letters of Paul and in other Christian writings. On many occasions entire households, including, no doubt, slaves in some instances, would come into the church as a unit. We must not regard it as a mere formality, therefore, when Paul speaks

in his letters pointedly to husbands, wives, fathers, children, masters, and slaves concerning their relations and obligations, because the larger homes were as much under the eye of Christians as is the minister's home in a small town today. Third, the existence of several house-churches in one city goes far to explain the tendency to party strife in the apostolic age. This is seen in the various schismatic groups in Corinth, for example, when various persons said, I am of Paul, I am of Cephas, I am of Apollos, I am of Christ; each group would have its own feelings of pride and prestige. Perhaps a squabble between Euodias and Syntyche in the church at Philippi had its origin in a conflict of personalities in the local house-church or churches (Phil 4:2). Fourth, a study of the house-church situation also throws light upon the social status of early Christians. Homes that were large enough to accommodate a considerable number of Christians at worship in one assembly must have been owned by persons of some considerable financial means. They would not need to have been extremely wealthy, but certainly in some of the early churches there were Christian believers that belonged not to the dispossessed proletariat but to the upper income brackets as well. So this gives us at least a little insight as to the range of the social status of early Christians. Fifth, the development of church polity can never be understood without reference to the house-churches. The host of such a group was almost inevitably a man of some education with a fairly broad background and at least some administrative ability. The very fact that he owned a house large enough to accommodate a great number of people would suggest that he had some qualities that could be useful in leadership. And so the house-church became a training ground for the Christian leaders; everything in such a situation favored the emergence of that host as the most prominent and influential member of the group. And this would in turn be a step to the presbyterate and then to the monarchical episcopate.

In the succeeding centuries we find evidence of the basic equality among these several local congregations of believers. We find, for example, instances preserved among the Greek papyri of Egypt of what we might call today certificates of transfer of church membership. I have looked at quite a number of these and they fall into a certain pattern or stereotyped formula in which the leader of the church at this place commends to the leader of the church in another city such and such a person or persons who are, as we would say today, "in good and regular standing" in that church, transferring their membership to the other one. To the best of my knowledge no such docu-

ment has ever been found regarding the transfer of membership from one to another local congregation of a mystery religion—such as the Mithraic mystery cult, or the cult of Isis, or the Cybele mysteries.

Such is a picture of the local congregations in the Greco-Roman world of the first couple of centuries. If one were to ask a Christian believer at that time where is the church, where is the *ecclesia tou theou*, the answer probably would have been to quote the words of Christ, "Where two or three are gathered together in His name, there is the church." This understanding ". . . that I am in the midst of them," (Matt. 18:20) with a triumphant assertion that the Lord has risen indeed and is alive forever more, would constitute the victorious creed of the earliest stage of the church. The Lord is in the midst of those who believe on Him. He who is, and was, and is to come and who is working everywhere, is present wherever two or three are gathered together in His name. The answer then would be, "Where Christ is there is the church."

It would also probably be pointed out that His word in Matthew 20:26 is appropriate for the church, that "the princes of this world exercise dominion and authority, but it shall not be so among you." That is, the Christian would have said that Christ is the one who binds and rules over the members of His church solely through the gifts of grace, the *charismata*, that are bestowed by Him through the Spirit, so that to one believer is given the gift of teaching, to another the gift of interpretation, to the third the gift of comforting. The gift of teaching is at the same time the gift of government. God's people, the *ecclesia*, is to be ruled not by man's word but by the word of God proclaimed by the divinely gifted teacher. And the *ecclesia* obeys the word of the teacher only if and so far as it recognizes therein the word of God. Thus the apostles built up and guided the church through the word. Besides the apostles, others called prophets and teachers were stirred up by God (I Cor. 12:28, etc.). Thus when the preaching of the word committed to these people was proclaimed, the apostle can write, "When you come together every one of you has a hymn, or lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation" (I Cor. 14:26). Although Paul has to write to correct aberrations at Corinth, in every one of these instances the word of God was alive to the edifying of the church, even if the special gifts of the apostle and prophet or teacher had not been given indiscriminately to all. Paul recognizes that the word of God is alive in every congregation of believers. The church has therefore

no ultimate need of any one class of officials. All believers, by the Holy Spirit living within them, are bearers of the keys of heaven and of the royal power which is in the house of God given by the word of God.

Of these several charismatic gifts of the Spirit to which Paul refers, that gift known as prophesying appears to have been favored by the apostle as best suited for the building up of the church. At the conclusion of his great hymn of Christian love in I Corinthians 13, the apostle continues in the first verse of Chapter 14, "Make love your aim and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy." Indeed, the author of the Epistle to the Ephesians goes so far as to declare that the church was built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone (Eph. 2:20).

Who were these prophets? What was their work? Well, first of all, the writer does not think of them as Old Testament prophets and New Testament apostles; otherwise he would have said that the church is built upon the prophets and the apostles. No, he puts it the other way—the church is built upon the apostles and prophets, that is, upon the New Testament apostles and the New Testament prophets. Primitive Christian prophecy is the inspired speech of charismatic persons through whom God's plan of salvation for the world and the community and His will for the lives of individual Christians would be made known. The prophet knows something of the divine mysteries (I Cor. 13:2). Agabus, for example, prophesied the great famine which would come on the world (Acts 11:28). Paul predicts the fate that awaits him at Jerusalem (Acts 21:10, 11). Nevertheless, primitive Christianity does not consist only in the disclosure of future events through prophets. The prophet speaks out on contemporary issues. Thus, he tells what must be done in specific situations. He blames and censures. He praises and encourages. His preaching contains administration and comfort, the call to repentance as well as that of promise (I Cor. 14:3). The work of the prophet, then, in the New Testament is not just for the replacement of the human ego by a divine, prophetic rapture. Words like the word "soothsayer," or words like the expression "manic possession," are not used in primitive Christian prophecy. This does not mean, of course, that the New Testament prophets did not have ecstatic experiences. That they did may be deduced from the narrative in Acts 2 about the Day of Pentecost, from Acts 4:31, and so on. But prophecy is more

important and ranks higher than speaking in tongues, the gift of glossolalia (cf. I Cor. 14:1, 5, 39).

At the same time, according to Paul, the prophet in the congregation is not just a seer but he is a recipient and preacher of the Word of God. He is not one who is possessed by God and who has lost control over his senses and has to do what the indwelling power orders. The idea of alienation and ravings are foreign to the New Testament prophet. The primitive Christian prophet is a man of full self-awareness. When he is speaking he can break off if a revelation is given to someone else. When two or three prophets have spoken in the congregation others may remain silent even though something is revealed to them (I Cor. 14:29 f.). The prophets, however, cannot influence the revelation itself. This comes from God with no co-operation on their part; the proclamation is of what is revealed to them, and this is in accordance with their own will.

Paul gives preference, as already noted, to prophecy over the other charismatic gifts of grace (I Cor. 14:1). The prophets are repeatedly mentioned directly after the apostles. Not only in Ephesians but elsewhere the church is also said to be built upon the apostles and prophets (I Cor. 12:28, 29; Rev. 18:20, etc.). The function of the apostle was to bear testimony to historical happenings in the life and the ministry of Jesus, namely what Jesus said and did on this or that occasion in the past. The function of the prophet was to interpret the meaning of what Christ had said in the past at that place and time, for the present circumstances in the church and the life of the individual Christian here and now. So, we can see the co-ordinate balance of the work of apostles and prophets: apostles bearing testimony as to what had happened, and prophets explaining the import of this or that word in Christ's ministry for the present events at Corinth, at Philippi, at Rome, etc.

Difficulties emerged, however, when false prophets appeared, who in their prophesying brought in all kinds of false teachings. Already in the New Testament there are warnings against the emergence of counterfeit prophecy. In I John 4:1-3, the author advises his readers, "Test the spirits, whether they are of God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world," and lead many astray. This is in fulfillment of what Christ predicted in the Sermon on the Mount, when He warned, "Beware of false prophets who will come to you dressed in sheeps' clothing but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matt. 7:15).

The early church had to devise some means of discriminating between the true and the counterfeit prophet. A little document called the *Didache*, which is a church manual of the early second century, provides a simple rule of thumb that would discriminate between those who were fakers and those who were true. This document directs that if a person comes to one's home and says, "I have been sent by God to preach the Gospel in this community; I would like food and lodging while I'm here," one should take him in and show hospitality. If he stays another day, that is all right, says the *Didache*. He may even stay three days, but if he wants to continue living there, taking advantage of his host's generosity, one should mark him as a false prophet and have nothing to do with him. This kind of simple rule of thumb would help in some cases but not in every case. The *Didache* also says that consistency of teaching and conduct is characteristic of a true prophet. He who does not practice what he preaches is a false prophet (*Did.* 11:10). Above all, complete unselfishness is required of the prophet. If a man orders a special kind of food for himself, and especially if he asks for money to meet his personal requirement, he is a false prophet. The number of such imposters, according to the *Didache*, will increase in the last days.

In this connection one should give attention to a very interesting second-century treatise, written not by a Christian but by a pagan named Lucian. Lucian was a pagan skeptic who was born in Samosata and traveled about widely. He gained a good university education and wrote many witty essays that have come down to us today. I suppose in his day he was something like the late H. L. Menkin of Baltimore, the agnostic iconoclastic editor of the now defunct *American Mercury Magazine*. Lucian was eager to expose any quack, any kind of charlatan. He wanted nothing to do with chicanery or trickery. One of his books is entitled *Alexander, the False Prophet*. This book gives us some understanding of the kind of thing that early Christians had to face. A man named Alexander in his travels came to a small town in Asia Minor called Abonuteichos. He was looking for a place to set up shop as prophet of Apollo. He made a survey (a Gallup poll I suppose) of the residents living in Abonuteichos and considering that they were sufficiently gullible, decided to settle down there. He prepared his publicity in this way: having obtained an ostrich egg, he cracked open one end carefully and removed the contents. Next he took a small live snake and put it inside the empty shell, affixing a wad of sealing wax over the hole. Then at nighttime he went to the

crossroads of the town of Abonuteichos and began to dig away the dust and mud and buried this egg that he had prepared. The next day, dressed in long saffron-colored robes typical of pagan prophets of that time and with his long hair flowing, he ran through the streets, clapping his hands and crying, "The god Apollo has sent me to be a prophet in your midst. You should consider yourselves very fortunate that Apollo has decided to have a prophet right here at hand for you to consult in Abonuteichos." Having gathered a crowd together he brought them to the crossroads and, after foaming at the mouth—for he had put some kind of soap in his mouth and made bubbles come out at the appropriate time—he fell down and scratched away the earth. Everybody was astounded when he took up the egg and held it before the crowd. Then, when he cracked it open and took out the live serpent, everybody knew that the god Apollo had authenticated Alexander, because the serpent was a dedicated mascot, as it were, of the god Apollo. This was a signal occurrence of divine inspiration, giving the seal of approval to Alexander. Well, as could be expected, the citizens of Abonuteichos were greatly impressed.

Alexander set up a tent and gave advice to persons with problems in marriage, love, business—anything. The problem was written out on a piece of papyrus, folded up, and sealed with sealing wax. Handed in one day, the questioner was to come back in a day or two and the answer was given in public. The person was asked, "This has not been opened, has it? It is still sealed? Open it, but don't read it out, and I will tell you what Apollo has told me of the contents, and I will also give his answer to your problem." According to Lucian's account, this was not done free for nothing, but Alexander made a charge for his prophesies and soon grew rich. He even had to employ money changers, because people would come from other lands with currencies different from the local currency. Even such a person as a patrician nobleman from Rome had sailed over the sea and traveled to this little backwoods town of Abonuteichos to consult Alexander! Alexander had obtained a tame python which he would wrap around his body, and on occasion he would put the head of the python under his armpit while holding in his hand a paper-mache' head of a serpent. The lower jaw was hinged to operate by long horse hairs so that it could be made to open and close in the manner of a ventriloquist's dummy. The windpipe of a crane, connected at the back of the head of this "serpent," extended behind the curtain so that an accomplice behind the curtain could speak through the artificial head. In the dim light

of the tent Alexander's accomplice would give out what Apollo had said.

Lucian tells us that he was suspicious that Alexander was a charlatan. On one occasion, when people were passing along in front of Alexander and bending down and kissing the prophet's hand, Lucian says he bent down and gave his hand a right good bite! Of course Alexander knew then that something was wrong, and said, "Psst! I'd like to talk to you privately for a moment." So, taking Lucian to one side he said, "I don't know what you suspect, but I'll give you a third of all my profits if you promise not to disclose what you imagine might be true." "No!" replied Lucian; "I will not be bribed; I'm going to write a book about you and expose you!" That's exactly what he did, and we have that book today exposing the trickery of this false prophet.

Now, that is the kind of thing early Christians had to contend with. The New Testament told them they should show hospitality and entertain strangers. But when people would take advantage of their good nature, and bring all kinds of erroneous teachings as though they were being prompted in this case by the Holy Spirit, what was to be done? The testing of the prophets meant that some sort of government of charismatic ministries needed to be applied. As the church grew in numbers, and especially as the charismatic gifts had counterfeits, gradually the charismatic ministry came to be supplanted by a delegated ministry. We can see the beginnings of this movement, I think, already in the New Testament.

In what follows the discussion will use such terms as monarchy, oligarchy, and democracy in connection with the constitution of the early church. I use these terms simply for pedagogic reasons so that we can quickly identify various kinds of church government. The terms monarchy, oligarchy, and democracy come from Aristotle's *Politics*, book 3, section 5, where he says very succinctly what is a fact: Either one, or a few, or the many must rule. If that is true in secular affairs it is true also in the church. By using these terms I do not mean to imply that the church constitution or church government depended originally on secular society; rather, we are using these terms for convenience and identification.

In the New Testament a predominantly monarchic administration is found reflected in the congregations that are referred to in what we call the pastoral Epistles, I and II Timothy and Titus. Here Timothy and Titus obviously play a prominent role, not, however, apart from the support of elders and others. Also

in the church at Jerusalem certain tendencies to monarchy can also be discovered, as for example in the person of Peter, and after him James, the Lord's brother. At times they appear—at one time Peter and at another time James—as spokesman and leader of that congregation. For example, in Acts 15 at the Apostolic Council it is James who sums up and makes the final declaration of the conference. According to tradition preserved by Josephus as well as Eusebius, James remained the high priest or the caliph of the Jewish Christian Church until his death about A.D. 64.

In general, however, the Jerusalem church was dominated by the oligarchy system. We read, for example in the first chapters of Acts, that it was jointly administered by all the apostles (first the eleven and afterwards the twelve when Mattias was elected), and also jointly through the seven "deacons" who were appointed to look after the temporal needs of the widows. There was also a special class of elders present at the Jerusalem church (Acts 11:30, 15:2-22).

Likewise the congregation as a whole had, juridically speaking, a decisive role to play. Such seems to be the case in Acts 1:15-25 at the election of another apostle after the defection of Judas Iscariot. There were 120 Christians of Jerusalem present and that number is not without significance in Jewish constitutional law. According to the Jewish concept a town congregation must have at least 120 men, in order to elect members to the Sanhedrin. While mentioning the number of people present, Luke in the first chapter of Acts shows not only that the election of Matthias was legally correct but also he ascribes considerable importance to the congregation in weighty matters. When the Apostolic Council was held we can also see that the congregation had a share, for ". . . it seemed good to the apostles and the elders *with the whole church* to choose men from among them and to send them to Antioch . . ." with the apostolic decrees (Acts 15:22). Therefore, though the members of the congregation did not take part in the discussion and did not, it seems, vote in the decision, they did ratify and implement the decision. Therefore, it looks as though the Jerusalem church had a mixed or a complex constitution, where inclinations toward monarchy, oligarchy, and democracy were present together without being mutually exclusive or even in conflict.

In the early second century the *Didache* says, "Elect, therefore, for yourselves bishops and deacons of the Lord, men meek, not lovers of money, truthful and approved for they too

minister to you the ministry of the prophets and the teachers." Later the procedure is not so simple. Distinctions came to be made between the divine vocation, the lay recognition of the call or election, the liturgical formulae, and, finally, the installation. Nevertheless, well into the Constantinian Age the laity still played an important part in the elevation of their bishops. Hippolytus in the *Apostolic Tradition* records the aforementioned refinements, but he says (chapter 2, section 1) that the bishop is still "elected by all the laity." Origen observes that the bishop must be ordained "in the presence of the whole laity in order that all may know for certain that the man elected to the priesthood is of the whole people, the most eminent and to avoid any subsequent change of mind or lingering doubt." And Cyprian makes a similar point. Cyprian, in fact, insists that just as the laity has the power of recognition they also have the power of withdrawing the jurisdiction of an unworthy cleric. So well known was the power of Christian lay people to approve or disapprove their leaders that even the pagan emperor, Alexander Severus, who ruled from 222 to 235, adopted some of the Christians' methods in selecting officials. He was obviously well acquainted with Christians because he knew the negative form of the Golden Rule and had it written on public pillars. He also had erected in his private chapel a statue of Christ along with statues of Abraham, Apollonius, and Orthus. He adopted from the Christians a practice of posting the names of his nominees to public office for the sake of securing public testimony as to their character, for he said, "It would be unjust, when Christians and Jews observed this custom in announcing the names of those who are to be ordained, that such a precaution should be omitted by us in the case of provincial governors, to whom were committed the lives and fortunes of men." (*Vita Alex.*, 45, 7).

In the third and fourth centuries, however, the rights of the laity come to be more and more restricted. The earlier right of laymen to baptize came to be restricted even from the time of Tertullian, who says that only in case of dire necessity could a layman baptize. Sermons given publicly by lay persons practically ceased in the third century, though it should be added that provision for lay preaching was made in the *Apostolic Constitutions*, book 8, section 12. For a layman to preach in the presence of a bishop was particularly objectionable, on the testimony of Eusebius, *Church History*, book 6, section 19. The laity's distinctive right continued to be exercised in the election of the bishop, though this too became gradually circumscribed through the co-operation of other bishops in the province and through the

rights of the metropolitan in the east. Similarly the congregation originally had the right to depose a bishop in case of grave shortcomings, a prerogative still exercised in Cyprian's time, though contested as early as the time of the Roman Bishop Calixtus I (died in 222).

Finally, it needs to be said that even the place in the church sanctuary where it was permitted that laity should sit eventually comes to be defined. A fourth century work, the *Apostolic Constitutions*, sets forth the following (in book 2, section 57); "The church building is like a ship; in the middle let the bishop's throne be placed, and at each side of him let the presbytery sit down. Let the deacons stand near at hand, for they are like the mariners, the managers of the ship. With regard to these let the laity sit on the other side with all quietness and in good order. Let the women sit by themselves, they also keeping silence. And in the middle let the reader stand upon some high place. Let him read the books of Moses, of Joshua and the books of Job and Solomon and the prophets. But when two lessons have been read, let some other person sing the hymns of David. Let the people join in the conclusion of the verses. Afterward let our own Acts [the *Apostolic Constitutions*] be read and the Epistles of Paul, our fellow worker. And afterwards let a deacon or a presbyter read the Gospels. And while the Gospel is being read let all the presbyters and deacons and all the people stand up in great silence. In the next place, let the presbyters one by one, not all together, exhort the people; and the bishop is in the last place, as being the commander. Let the porters stand at the doors of the men and observe them. Let the deaconesses also stand at the portals of the women like shipmen. But if anyone be found sitting out of his place, let him be rebuked by a deacon as a manager of the foreship and be removed into place proper for him. Let the young persons sit by themselves, if there is a place for them, and if not, let them stand upright. But let those that are already stricken in years sit in order. Let the younger women also sit by themselves, if there be a place for them; but if there be not, let them stand behind the other women. Let those women which are married and have children be placed by themselves, . . . Let the deacons be disposers of these places that everyone of those who come in may go to his proper place and may not sit at the doorway. In like manner let the deacon oversee the people that no one may whisper, nor slumber, nor laugh, nor talk. All ought in the church to stand wisely and soberly and attentively, having their attention fixed on the word of the Lord. After prayer and before the Eucharist then let men give the men, and women give

the women, the kiss of the Lord. But let no one do it with deceit, as Judas betrayed the Lord with a kiss."

By way of summary, we see the development which the whole people of God, the *laos tou theou*, underwent in the early church. We find a gradual differentiation of functional differences between clerical offices and the unordained. We find gradation at several levels. The complete clericalization in a graduated series of offices extended from bishop to doorkeeper. And this is reduced finally to the appointment of the special places where each one is to sit in the congregation. There is also the assimilation of the teaching and healing functions in the office of the bishop, with the delegated catechist under his supervision. Earlier teaching and healing had been free or charismatic, and in the ante-Nicene period the teachers had been formed into what was called a choir alongside the clergy. We see also that there was recruitment of a new type of convert in the Constantinian era with an accompanying loss of feeling of a radical distinction between the church and the world. The radical distinction that replaces what in pre-Constantinian times was the distinction between the unconverted and the church—the world and the believers—is now the distinction between those, on the one side, who are ordained as clergy, and the unordained on the other.

Such a development called forth a comment from Chrysostom, who in this post-Constantinian time deplores the diminution of a sense of participation that once was characteristic of the worship held in the house-churches. In the fourth century, when the congregation met in a grand basilica where liturgical responsibility was confined more and more to certain persons, who "performed" in front of others, there developed a theater-like character of the worship. The laity now bring into the sanctuary, Chrysostom complains, what they practice in the theater, and when the minister makes a good point in his sermon the congregation applauds him. There are references to such applause in more than one sermon of Chrysostom, who rebuked the congregation for bringing the habits of the theater into the church. In one case the stenographer who was taking down the sermon verbatim indicates that the congregation even applauded Chrysostom's rebuke! Chrysostom movingly recounts the full meaning of the royal priesthood of God in which cleric and laic alike are on the same level—alike in Eucharistic offerings, in communion and prayers for the mutual fortification in Christ, and in the disciplinary functions of the church. Thereupon, Chrysostom challenges his congregation, "Now I have said all

this that each of the laity may also keep his attention awake, that we may understand that we are all one body having such differences among ourselves as members with members, and may not throw the whole upon priests, but ourselves so care for the whole church as for a body common to us." The tone of this passage indicates that Chrysostom was longing for the good old days of the infancy of the church, before fellowship had come to be replaced by organization, and when the work of the Spirit was not yet so regularized, as to result, in some places, in being quenched entirely.

EPISTOLARY LITERATURE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

LOUIS F. GOUGH

BESIDES the two official letters included in the Acts of the Apostles, genuine letters written true to the conventional letter-form of the period in which they were written, the greater part of the New Testament is made up of books called epistles. These epistles have been treated in various manners and categorized in numerous ways in certain literary studies.

In R. G. Moulton's *The Literary Study of the Bible* and his smaller and later work, *A Short Introduction to the Literature of the Bible* the twenty-one books of the New Testament which are usually classified as epistles are categorized in the following way:

Moulton divides the epistles under four main headings: (1) Pastoral Epistle or Pastoral Intercourse; (2) Epistolary Treatise; (3) Epistolary Manifesto; and (4) Wisdom Epistle.

According to Moulton the common structure of the "pastoral epistle" over and above the formal greeting at the commencement and personal message at the close is of three distinct parts: (a) "Recognition of the mutual relations between the writer and the people addressed"; (b) "At the end is exhortation"; and (c) "Between the recognition and exhortation comes the doctrinal discussion."¹ In this frame Moulton includes I Corinthians, II Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, I Thessalonians, II Thessalonians, I Timothy, II Timothy, Titus, Philemon, II John, III John.

The second group, "epistolary treatises," Moulton characterizes by their not being addressed to a particular church on the one hand,² and on the other hand the doctrinal discussion is a formal and ordered exposition. The Epistle of Paul to the Romans and the Epistle to the Hebrews are according to Moulton "epistolary treatises."

The next class of epistles are the "epistolary manifestos." Moulton writes: "Distinct from the pastoral epistles, which are concerned with the government of the churches, the manifesto

is rather an act of faith: not a discussion of details, but a reassertion of the Christian hope in all its fulness, coloured in its form by the particular circumstances which have called it forth.”³ Moulton includes under this heading Ephesians (further described as a circular epistolary manifesto), Colossians, I Peter, II Peter, Jude, I John.

Moulton includes the remaining book, the Epistle of St. James, in his group of “wisdom literature” along with Matthew and the Fourth Gospel. According to him this branch of literature is characterized by its being a “miscellany of sayings, essays, and discourses . . . a collection of meditations on life. . . . It is Wisdom Christianized.”⁴ In support of his argument Moulton writes: “In this work there is nothing of the epistle except the superscription. The regular order of thought which appears in Hebrews or Romans is lacking; nor is there a trace of that reference to affairs of a particular church which characterizes the pastoral epistles.”⁵

C. A. Briggs thinks of the “epistle” as a form of prose literature. He characterizes the Biblical epistle in this manner:

[The epistle] is the contribution of the Aramaic language to the Old Testament in the letters contained in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. . . . In the New Testament . . . the epistle receives its magnificent development in the letters of St. James, St. Peter, St. Paul, St. Jude, and St. John—some familiar, some dogmatic, some ecclesiastical, and some pastoral, some speculative and predictive, and in the Epistle to the Hebrews we have an elaborate essay.⁶

Recent discoveries of papyrus letters of all kinds—familiar letters, business letters, petitions, complaints, applications, and official letters ranging in their dating from the Roman conquest of Egypt to the tenth century A.D., particularly the letters of Oxyrynchus—have thrown great light on the literary study of the epistles of the New Testament. Studies have been made in these Greek papyri and certain conclusions as to the general characteristics have been drawn. In light of what seems to be the most consistent and trustworthy of the conclusions of these studies, I shall try to characterize and arrange the New Testament Epistles.

Adolf Deissmann in full cognizance of the abounding research which has been made in the growth of the New Testament and the origin of its several parts is also aware of the paucity of literary historical study which has been done in the New Testament in its relation to ancient literature. To such a need he addresses himself in *Light from the Ancient East* and in another of his works, *Bible Studies*.

Deissman makes a sharp distinction between literary and non-literary books of the New Testament in their original forms, that is before they became a canonical corpus. He calls attention to the non-literary character of leases, application, receipts, letters, and other writings, which he characterizes as products not of art but of life.⁷ Particularly as touching the "letter" he writes: "A letter is something non-literary, a means of communication between persons who are separated from each other. Confidential and personal in its nature, it is intended only for the person or persons to whom it is addressed, and not at all for the public or any kind of publicity."⁸

The "epistle" is different; it is a work of art, which is merely cast in the form of the "letter." Without these drapings most epistles are intelligible whereas the address, personal references, and subscription are essential to the intelligibility of the "letter." In the "epistle" all that seems letter-like is mere ornament; if any of the ornament crumbles off the character of the whole thing is not essentially altered."⁹

Whereas the "letter" is not intended for publication, the "epistle" is written with a general public in mind for its readers. The "letter" rises spontaneously out of a life situation, and its purpose is to communicate to a situation of a limited temporal duration. Not so with an "epistle." "As an artistic literary form the epistle has no intention of being transitory. Being published from the first in a considerable number of copies it cannot so easily perish as a letter, of which there is only one or at most two copies made."¹⁰ The private character of the "letter" is a very distinctive characteristic.¹¹ Good examples of the ancient epistolography, which was written with the probability of publication in view, are the works in Greek of Dionysius and of Plutarch; and in Latin, the letters of Seneca and of the younger Pliny.

In the light of these judgments Deissman concludes that the study of the ancient papyrus letters along with certain *ostraca* and letters written on lead, newly discovered,

obliges us to maintain that in the New Testament there are both non-literary letters and literary epistles. . . . [And that] the letters of Paul are not literary; they are real letters, not epistles; they were written by Paul not for the public and posterity, but for the persons to whom they are addressed.¹²

Some letters, however, which were non-literary epistles at the time of their writing, their publication never entering the mind of the writer, have been raised to the literary level subsequent to their serving the direct purpose for which they were written.

The letters of Aristotle and of Cicero are examples of this literary process. So it was with the letters of Paul. Deissmann comes to the second conclusion that although the Pauline Epistles were not in their original form real "epistles," yet they were later raised to the level of literary letters, stated in *Light from the East*, page 239:

St. Paul was not a writer of epistles but of letters; he was not a literary man. His letters were raised to the dignity of literature afterwards, when the piety of the churches collected them, multiplied them by copying and so made them accessible to the whole of Christendom. Later still they became sacred literature, when they were received among the books of the "New" Testament then in process of formation; and in this position their literary influence has been immeasurable.

Therefore in the light of these judgments, how does Deissmann categorize the books of the New Testament?

Deissmann classifies the epistolary content of the New Testament as follows:

Letters: Philemon,¹³ I and II Corinthians,¹⁴ I and II Thessalonians,¹⁵ Galatians, II and III John¹⁶ (real letters), and Romans.¹⁷

Literary epistles: Hebrews,¹⁸ James,¹⁹ I and II Peter, and Jude..²⁰

Deissmann classifies the Apocalypse of John as an epistle:

The "Apocalypse of John," however, is strictly speaking an epistle: it has in 1:4 an epistolary praescript with a religious wish, and 22:21 a conclusion suitable for an epistle. The epistle is again subdivided at the beginning into seven small portions addressed to the churches in Asia. . . . They represent, however, . . . a more letter-like species of epistle than those we have been considering. The writer wishes to achieve certain ends with single churches, but at the same time to influence the whole body of Christians, or at any rate Asiatic Christians.²¹

He classifies James as a religious diatribe. Of I John he writes:

[I John] has more of the specific characters of an epistle, and is, of course, even less like a letter. The little work has got along with the epistles, but it is best described as a religious diatribe, in which Christian meditations are loosely strung together for the benefit of the community of the faithful.²²

Approximately fifty years ago Francis Xavier J. Exler made a study of Greek epistolography, in which he examined hundreds of Greek papyrus letters dating from the third century B.C. to the third century A.D.²³ He reached two conclusions: (1) The material at hand does not warrant any conclusions concerning the origin of the Greek epistolary form. In other words he found that the Greek letter-form used for six hundred years at the turn of the era is of ancient origin and development. (2) "There is a remarkable similarity in the letter-forms throughout the Ptolemaic and the Roman periods."²⁴

Exler was able at the end of his study to form certain generalizations as to the nature and form of the Greek letters which he examined. He found a certain style of letter writing in which the writer consistently employed a certain set of formulae. Following is a list of ten of these formulae which will help us to make a literary categorization of the twenty-one epistolary books of the New Testament, which has been the object of this study:

1. The basic formula: A— to B—, *charein* (may you be happy) is used in all sorts of letters: private letters, business letters, communications between officials, as well as in letters from or to officials. [3rd century B.C. to 3rd century A.D.]²⁵

2. Throughout the Ptolemaic and Roman periods the formula A— to B—, *charein* is by far the most common.²⁶

3. Familiar letters having the opening formula A— to B—, *charein* are followed by the closing formula *erroso* (may you fare well) or one of its modifications. Most official letters use the same final salutation. . . . [Some] have no special formula at all, but simply omit the final salutation.²⁷

4. During the Roman period it was a common custom to add greetings at the end of letters. These *aspasasthe* (greet) phrases appear in various forms.²⁸

5. The closing phrases are greatly varied by the addition of terms of familiarity.²⁹

6. The apostrophic formula *chairois . . . chaire*,³⁰ were not necessarily employed by the uneducated . . . the writer was at liberty to use a less formal mode of address if he chose to do so.³¹

7. In other than familiar letters a declaration was attached regarding the identity of the scribe.³²

8. Throughout the entire period . . . there is a remarkable similarity in the formulas employed. Their phraseology remains substantially the same. Yet so great is the variety in detail, that hardly any two forms are quite alike.³³

9. Among the opening formula we meet the phrase *charein kai dia pantos hugiainein* (may you always be happy and in good health) as early as the latter half of the first century B.C. . . . The *hugiainein* wish makes its first appearance in the papyri in the beginning of the first century A.D.³⁴

10. Very frequently the letters are without any date whatsoever . . . in private letters the date is missing almost as frequently as it is given; and in official letters the absence of the date is not rare.³⁵

In the light of these conclusions and those of Deissmann and Moulton, we shall examine the epistolary literature of the New Testament, Pauline first and the remaining epistles second, as to their usage of the Greek letter-form and place in epistolary literature.

The first striking thing about the Pauline letters is the consistency with which Paul used the conventional opening formula of the Greek letter form, of course with certain modifi-

cations, which we should expect in view of his Christian concept of providence, of peace, and joy. In every one of his thirteen letters Paul utilizes the A— to B— *charein* formula. Paul in nominative (together with other co-writers in the case of Galatians, Colossians, I and II Thessalonians, and Philemon) identifies himself as the apostle, or servant, or prisoner of Jesus Christ and the Father. In the case of the Thessalonian correspondence the identification is left out. Here, however, Paul identifies himself with Silvanus and Timothy who are brothers and collaborators in Christ. In every case following the name of the writer with certain identification and comment appears the name of the addressee in the dative case.

The next member of the opening formula, *charein* (be happy) is consistently rendered *charis* (grace) by Paul because of his understanding of the source of the Christian's joy and victory. To this *charis* Paul adds *eirene* (peace) and in the case in I and II Timothy is added *eleos* (mercy). The phrase "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" stands also intact with only slight variation in every letter except in the Timothy correspondence and in I Thessalonians, where it is merely abbreviated.

The convention of a salutation at the end of the letter *erroso*, *errosthe*, *eutuchei* (lucky) is consistently observed by Paul. Here the Christianized concept is almost invariably used *He charis tou kurion hemon Iesou Christou meth' humon* in Colossians, I and II Timothy, and Titus a shortened form is used.

The common custom of greeting at the end of the letter the *aspasasthe* (greet) with occasional addition of terms of familiarity is also very noticeable in Paul's letters; viz., Romans, I and II Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians, I Thessalonians, II Timothy, Titus, and Philemon.

With this cursory examination of the literary forms for writing used by Paul it is readily seen that the Apostle consistently wrote his letters within the bounds of the conventional letter writing of his time. To be sure, he exercised certain liberties in the usages of these habits of writing, yet not without great regard for the prevalent conventions. These modifications are due to Paul's Christian ingeniousness and secondly, it was not at all uncommon for all letter writers of the first century A.D. to take varied liberties. Hence the great variety of details among the Greek papyrus letters.³⁶ Therefore it is safe to conclude that Paul's writings, whether they be considered "epistles" or "letters," were written in genuine Greek letter-form conven-

tional in the Ptolemaic and Roman period. We must now consider the two questions: Were they real letters or epistles, all thirteen or a part of them, and what type of letters or epistles are they?

Did Paul write any of his letters with the publication of them in view? It is quite generally accepted that he did not. Their spontaneity and direction to the addressee are of all things most recognizable. It is quite evident from the letters themselves that the writer did not expect any but the persons to whom the letters were addressed would read them, except in the case of the Colossian correspondence (Col. 4:16) and possibly Ephesians. And even here the expanded group of readers still comprises a limited number of people. In all of the letters Paul addresses them to either a church in a particular district or to an individual. In the case of the Roman letter, the addressees are "all the called saints, beloved of God in Rome," which essentially means that Paul addresses his letter to the Church in Rome. And in the case of the Ephesian letter: Even though there is strong manuscript evidence of its being a circular letter, still that circle is a restricted one, and in that case the letter could have been directed to a certain district comprising several churches as in the case of the Galatian correspondence.

Not only are the readers of the Pauline letters restricted, but also the things which Paul writes are directed against definite and specific problems or aspects of life in the several churches. Even in the Roman letter, which has been characterized as a mere theological treatise or compendium of Paul's theology dressed in the garb of a letter, there are strong marks which point to its being a pure pastoral letter addressed to particular needs of the Church in Rome. Paul establishes for the Church in Rome, which was made up of both Jewish and Gentile Christians, the universality of the judgment of God and of his gospel. He points out the wickedness and state of separation from God on the part of both groups, and their need of the Savior of the Gospel. Paul also deals with the dispensation of the Jews and the Gentiles, all in direct contingency with the situation in Rome.

Therefore in light of the facts it does not appear that Paul wrote his letters for publication. They were private letters directed to a limited group of readers—not for the general public. The Apostle directed his writings to specific problems, which were for him only to be dealt with in a temporal situation. The truths that he wrote were eternal truths; yet the application of these truths was only seen by Paul in the temporal situation. We can safely conclude with Adolf Deissmann that the Pauline writings are genuine "letters," though later raised to literary letters to

be published and read by men everywhere and in all ages because of their eternal worth.³⁷

Romans, the Corinthian correspondence, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and I and II Thessalonians were addressed to particular churches, and were written in reference to specific situations peculiar to those particular churches. Therefore these letters were pastoral letters as Paul wrote them.

I and II Timothy, Titus, and Philemon were addressed to individuals. The Epistle of Paul to Philemon is obviously a "familiar letter"; that is generally accepted. The Apostle writes real letters to Timothy and to Titus. Even in these the writer speaks of the requisites for the office of a bishop, of certain warnings which the young ministers should relay on to the churches under their care, of pastoral directions, of keeping alive in them the gift of their ministry, of guarding against unprofitable discussion, of disciplining disorderly teachers, and other pastoral directions. These letters are definitely "familiar letters" written from the elder to the younger ministers. However, even here the pastoral content is strong. This is to be noted in Paul's writing to Philemon about his relation in the Church to his converted slave Onesimus. The Great Missionary wrote familiar letters, and his care for the Church was so great that the heart of the pastor as well as of the missionary is seen in all that he wrote.

And now let us consider the remaining pieces of the epistolary literature. The Epistle to the Hebrews has nothing of the opening formula of a Greek letter. It is possible that at a very early date prior to the witness of any other parts, the opening formula could have been lost due to deterioration or some other cause. This supposition, however, because of the lack of any manuscript evidence is disputable. There are some personal references, greetings, and a salutation, all in the last chapter which fit perfectly into the letter-forms studied thus far. The epistle is the longest book of the epistolary literature of the New Testament. And it is quite evidently written in the most polished style of all. These characteristics, however, though inclined away from the "real" letter-form, do not bar entirely a piece of writing from the category of the "real" letter.³⁸

The Epistle has, except for the ending, the characteristic of an "elaborate essay" as C. A. Briggs has said. Here is the "elaborate and symmetrical argument written in brilliant style" as observed by R. G. Moulton. The author of Hebrews has a coherent plan which he executes in deliberate and beautiful style. The Epistle seems to have been written to a particular group of

Jewish Christians. R. G. Moulton is probably most nearly right in classifying the Epistle to the Hebrews as an "epistolary treatise."

The Epistle of James at the beginning has the appearance of a letter. The three parts of the conventional opening formula are distinctly present: James in the nominative case; to the twelve tribes which are of the dispersion in the dative case; and *charein*. The body of the epistle is definitely literature of a general order. It is made up of a number of short essays or sentences of ethical teaching, having the nature of wisdom literature. The ending has nothing of the nature of a letter. Since, therefore, the addressee is of a general character, and since the body of the Epistle is like a treatise, and since it lacks the ending of a letter with personal references; the Epistle of James should be classed as an epistolary treatise.

The First Epistle of Peter is definitely a pastoral letter. Its form is true to the conventional Greek letter form with personal references. It is directed to a definite group of the Church, those of the elect who are of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. Peter wrote to meet a definite situation among these Christians. As a pastor he comforted and exhorted them to steadfastness in persecution.

The Second Epistle of Peter is an epistolary treatise. It has the form of a letter in the beginning. It is addressed to a general group of readers, "to those who have obtained equal precious faith." The lack of personal references is noticeable. If its authenticity can be accepted, Peter in this epistle writes a last testimony before his departure. "Yea, I will give diligence that at every time ye may be able after my decease to call these things to remembrance" (1:15). He reminds his readers of the sure witness that he had given of "the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1:16). Then he warns about the entrance of false teachers and of the suddenness of the coming of the Lord. Finally, Peter exhorts to steadfastness and closes with a doxology. The epistle is like the final blessing of a patriarch of Israel, calling witness to the faithfulness of God and his own steadfastness in covenant with God, and his exhortation to steadfastness in keeping covenant with God on the part of the children of God.

The first Epistle of John has nothing of the form of the Greek letter used so profusely by St. Paul. References to writing to particular persons occur frequently in the epistle. "My little children, these things I write unto you" (2:1). "I write unto you, my little children. . . . I write unto you, fathers. . . . I write unto you, young men" (2:12, 13). "Little Children, it is

last the hour" (2:18). "Marvel not, brethren, if the world hate you" (3:13). Here we see John's readers are addressed in the vocative case. And he closes with "Little children, guard yourselves from idols." In the light of these references it is evident that the Epistle is written in epistolary form. It is addressed to the general reading public. It is a treatise in which John urges the children of God to walk with God as those delivered from sin by the manifestation of the Son of God. He denounces the love of the world and pleads for the children of God to love God and their brethren. The Epistle is an epistolary treatise.

The second Epistle of John is either a private letter or a pastoral letter, depending on the interpretation of the addressee, *eklektei kurai kai tois teknois autas* (to the chosen lady and her children). The more correct interpretation is in all probability the spiritual one which is in connection with the exhortation of verse 5: "I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote to thee a new commandment, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another." The salutation at the end of the "children of thine elect sister" would be members of a sister church. The little epistle conforms fully to the conventional letter form of the Hellenistic period. The letter was written to meet a specific need. The addressee was in danger of receiving false teachers. The exhortation was not to receive them into her house (church). She also needed to be exhorted to love.

The third Epistle of John is a "familiar letter" pure and simple. It is true to the form of the Hellenistic letter. It is interesting to note the unique salutation of the opening formula and its closeness to the type mentioned by Exler quoted in conclusion number 9 above. The presbyter writes to Gaius whom he loves commending him for his living a true Christian life and aiding journeying brethren and strangers. Reference is made to an unruly acquaintance of the writer and his correspondent. Other personal reference is made, and a future personal visit is mentioned.

The Epistle of Jude at the beginning has the form of a letter. "Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ, being called: Mercy unto you and peace and love be multiplied." Jude warns his readers against ungodly men "who have crept in privily"—evidently a heresy. And he exhorts to earnest faith. He is concerned about the danger of his readers' falling away. Absence of personal reference is noticeable. Even though the addressee is of a general nature; yet because the problem dealt with seems to be a specific situation, it appears that this little

letter should be considered a pastoral letter directed to a specific group though hardly discernable in the term of the addressee.

The Revelation of John is treated by Deissmann as an epistle. To be sure the book is cast in a epistolary form; yet because of its stronger relation to another form of Biblical literature, it is more proper to place it in a separate category from the epistolary literature as such in the New Testament.

In the light of this study, therefore, the epistolary literature of the New Testament could be classified in the following manner:

Pastoral Letters

Romans
I Corinthians
II Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
I Thessalonians
II Thessalonians
I Peter
II John
Jude

Epistolary Treatises

Hebrews
James
II Peter
I John

Familiar Letters

I Timothy
II Timothy
Titus
Philemon
III John

FOOTNOTES

¹ R. G. Moulton, *A Short Introduction to the Literature of the Bible* (Boston, 1901), p. 105.

² *Ibid.*, 111: "It is not addressed to any church; it is intended for general circulation among 'all that are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints. . . .'" This might hold good also for Ephesians in light of evidence.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 187, 188.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 187.

⁶ Briggs, C. A., *General Introduction to the Study of Holy Scripture*, New York, 1899), p. 340.

⁷ Otto Roller failed to make a distinction between official documents and private letters. (*Das Formular der paulinischen Briefe*, Stuttgart, 1933, p. 29). This caused him to require a degree of definiteness of form not genuine, and too constrictive for the Pauline letters. There were definite forms for letter writing commonly used in Paul's time. Paul did not ignore them but used them: "deren Anwendung konventionell erfolgte." Yet he exercised some freedom within these bounds for his own personal creation.

Moreover, most letter writers took quite a little freedom in their usage of these forms and did not conform themselves as consistently to the norm as Roller would have us think: *Ibid.* p. 30: "Diese vier Stucke, . . . namlich die Erkennbarkeit vom Absender, vom Adressaten, von der Vollständigkeit, die hier durch Anrede und Unterschrift sichergestellt ist and der Authentizität, sind also fur den Brief wesentlich, obwohl sie mit dem Inhalte an sich nichts zu tun haben. Auch das Datum rechnet man heute zu einem vollständigen Briefe, doch kann es im Altertum wie heute, namentlich in Privatbriefen, leicht fehlen, ohne den Briefcharakter in Frage zu stellen. Die vier erstgenannten Stucke aber waren und sind stets notwendige Teile des Briefes gewesen und zu allen Zeiten in bestimmte Formen gekleidet worden."

⁸ A. Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, trans. by L.M.R. Attraction (2nd edition; New York, 1911), pp. 146, 147.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 236.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 223.

¹¹ The private character and spontaneity of Paul's letters are germane to the reliability of their positively documentary value for the history of the apostolic period. Deissmann's poetic description of the milieu out of which the letters of Paul sprung bears quoting. "If the artisan-missionary at Ephesus wishes to talk to the foolish Galatians or the poor brethren at Corinth, then in the midst of the hurry and worry of pressing daily duties he dictates a letter, adding at the end a few lines roughly written with his own hand and weary weaver's hand. These were no books or pamphlets for the world or even for Christendom; they were confidential pronouncements, of whose existence and contents the missionary's nearest companions often knew nothing: Luke even writes his Acts of the Apostles without knowledge of the letters of St. Paul (which were written but not yet published)."

¹² Deissmann, *op. cit.*, p. 225.

¹³ Deissmann, *op. cit.*: "Paul's letter to Philemon is no doubt the one most clearly seen to be a letter" (p. 226).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*: "The first Epistle to the Corinthians . . . is no pamphlet addressed to the Christian public, but a real letter to Corinth in part an answer to a letter from the church there" (p. 228, f.).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*: "The two Epistles to the Thessalonians are also genuine letters, the first even more so than the second. They represent, so to say, the average type of Paul's letters" (p. 229).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*: "Third John was entirely a private note . . . it must have been preserved among the papers of Gaius as a relic of the great presbyter" (p. 234).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*: "Paul's letter to the Romans . . . is least like a letter. . . . Romans is a long letter . . . it is not an epistle addressed to all the world or even to Christendom, containing . . . a compendium of St. Paul's dogmatic and ethical teaching" (p. 231).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*: "The longest 'epistle' in the New Testament, the so-called Epistle to the Hebrews, is altogether anonymous, as it has come down to us. Even the 'address' has vanished. Were it not for some details in 13:22-24 that sound letter-like, one would never suppose that the work was meant to be an epistle, not to mention a letter" (p. 236).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*: "The Epistle of James is from the beginning a little work of literature, a pamphlet addressed to the whole of Christendom, a veritable epistle. The whole of its contents agrees therewith. There is none of the unique detail peculiar to the situation, such as we have in the letters of St. Paul, but simply general questions, most of them still conceivable under the present conditions of our church life" (p. 236).

²⁰ *Ibid.*: "The Epistles of Peter and of Jude . . . quite unreal addresses; the letter-like touches are purely decorative" (p. 235).

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 237, f.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 237.

²³ This study, a doctrinal dissertation, was published in 1923: Francis Xaxier J. Exler, *The Form of the Ancient Greek Letter; A Study in Greek Epistolography* (Washington: Cath. Univ. of Amer.).

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 136.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 60, 61.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 134, 69.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 135.

³⁰ Henry A. Steen ("Les Cliches Epistolaires dan les Lettres sur Papyrus Grecques," *Classica et Mediaevalia*, I, 1938, p. 124) believes that reluctance of the usage of imperatives was due to a certain sense of courtesy.

³¹ Exler, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 136, 137.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 133.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

³⁶ *Vide supra* No. 8, page 9.

³⁷ In connection with this the comment of two other scholars: George Milligan: "Pauline writings . . . are popular rather than literary in their origin, and were, intended, in the first instance, not for publication, or for after-ages, but to meet the immediate practical needs of the Churches and individuals to whom they were in the first instance addressed" (*Here & There Among the Papyri*, London, 1922, p. 32). Wm. Ramsay: "In the individual case they [the letters] discover the universal principle, and state it in such a way as to reach the heart of every man similarly situated, and yet they state this, not in the way of formal exposition, but in the way of direct personal converse, written in place of spoken" (*The Letters of the Seven Churches of Asia*, London, 1904, page 25).

³⁸ Exler, *op. cit.*: "Though length as such does not affect the nature of a letter, too great length would establish a presumption against any work being properly classified under epistolography" (page 17). "A real letter may be polished or unpolished" (page 17).



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